FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

ROCKETMAN

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
WRITTEN BY
Lee Hall
ROCKETMAN

Written by

Lee Hall
1  INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL - DAY

ELTON JOHN in a sequined and feathered catsuit storms along, a halo of coloured feathers and enormous stained-glass spectacles. He is a man with a purpose but looks like shit.

2  INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton sits dramatically in the seat and stares confrontationally at the circle of addicts. He sweats profusely.

ELTON
How long is this going to take?

COUNSELOR
That’s really up to you. You need to set your own pace.....

Everybody stares. Elton is clearly uncomfortable.

ELTON
Right then! I know how this goes. My name is Elton John. And I’m an alcoholic. And a cocaine addict. And a sex addict. And a bulimic! I’m also a shopaholic who has problems with weed, prescription drugs and anger management.

The group look at him incredulously. Elton blinks angrily behind his enormous glasses. An awkward silence.

COUNSELOR
Perhaps we should talk about your childhood?

ELTON
Perhaps we should talk about your hair!?

Some of the group are shocked and some laugh. The counselor smiles.

COUNSELOR
What are your earliest memories?

Cue: The frantic opening from ‘THE BITCH IS BACK’. Elton gets up and walks to the middle of the room and sings.
**ELTON**

I was justified when I was five
Raisin’ Cain, I spit in your eye
Times are a changing now the poor
get fat, But the fever’s gonna
catch you when the bitch gets back,
oh, oh, oh.

The patients and counselor are dumbfounded as out of nowhere
a child (REGGIE), 6 years old, rides in through the double
doors on a bike with stabilizers and circles Elton. The young
Reggie stops and stares at Elton and joins in the song.

**ELTON/REGGIE**

I’m a bitch, I’m a bitch oh, the
bitch is back, stone cold sober as
a matter of fact, I can bitch, I
can bitch cause I’m better than
you, It’s the way that I move, the
things that I do oh.

A shocked Elton tries to grab Reggie as he dumps his bike and
runs out the door. A singing Elton chases after him, the
therapy group and counselor follow behind.

**EXT. STREET, PINNER – DAY**

Young Reggie bursts through the doors and enters a 1950’s
London residential street. Reggie, walks down the middle of
the street followed by Elton and the rehab group. The
milkman, postman and lollipop lady all wave to him. A brass
band come marching down the street and they all smile and
wave. People stream out of the houses and join in the group
dance. The rehab group, lead by Elton, follow and sing along.

**ELTON/REGGIE**

Eat meat on a Friday, that’s all
right. Even like steak on a
Saturday night. I can bitch the
best at your social do’s. I get
high in the evening sniffing pots
of glue, oh, oh oh.

It becomes a dance number that Reggie conducts with the rehab
group and the people in the street. Reggie turns into the
driveway of a drab house, turns back to the rehab group
looking over the fence.

**REGGIE**

I’m a bitch, I’m a bitch oh, the
bitch is back. Stone cold sober as
a matter of fact.

(MORE)
REGGIE (CONT'D)
I can bitch, I can bitch cause I'm
better than you. It's the way that
I move, the things that I do oh..

Elton looks troubled.
The music stops abruptly.
SHEILA, his mum, comes out holding a mechanical sweeper.

SHEILA
Reggie! You're late! I've thrown
your dinner in the bin! Get inside.

Reggie tucks in his shirt and follows his mum into the house.

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

An archetypal suburban scene. IVY, grandma, in the kitchen
works on a sewing machine. A depressed budgie lolls in its
cage. Sheila attacks a carpet with the mechanical sweeper
like she's trying to break it. Reggie follows her around.

REGGIE
Is he back?

SHEILA
What am I? Thin air? *

REGGIE
Are you sure he's actually coming
home?

SHEILA
I wouldn't get your hopes up. He's
very unreliable and very selfish. *

REGGIE
But will you send him to see me if
I'm already in bed?

SHEILA
Reggie! Stop being a nuisance! I
need to get this done before I go out.

She picks him up and puts him on the piano stool. The radio
plays: The Skater's Waltz.

As dust hangs in the sunlight, Reggie sways to the music and
looks at the piano keyboard. As it lilts on in the background
Reggie tries a note - remarkably it is in tune.
Reggie plays the note again and then adds two more. Again they are exactly in tune. He looks around. No one pays attention:

Reggie tries again and this time plays a whole section of melody and ends with a low note with his left hand. Bong!! Suddenly the world seems to stop. The budgie stares frozen on its perch, boggle eyed. Ivy comes in from the Kitchen. Sheila turns around to see what all the fuss is about.

REGGIE
Did I do something wrong?

IVY
Bloody hell, Sheila. Maybe we should get him some lessons.

SHEILA
I’d love too, if it’d get him out from under my feet but we’re not made of money.

INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton takes off his feathered head-dress.

ELTON
Mum always supported me. She knew I was very talented. Both my parents did.

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sheila paints her nails and gets ready to go out. Ivy sits in front of the fire and reads a magazine. The doorbell rings. Ivy looks up, Sheila looks pissed off.

INT. LANDING, REGGIE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Reggie rushes out of his room and listens as Sheila goes to the door.

I/E. FRONT DOOR, REGGIE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The door opens to reveal STANLEY, Reggie’s dad, dressed immaculately in his RAF uniform. He gives a faint rueful smile to Sheila and Ivy.
SHEILA
You’ve managed to drag yourself home then.

IVY
I see the milkman’s back. Hello, Stanley.

STANLEY
How are you, Ivy?

SHEILA
Like you care. Well, come on then! You’re letting in a draught.

He wipes his very shiny boots and steps inside.

STANLEY
You’ve put on weight.

SHEILA
And you look shorter. How long you back?

STANLEY
I’ve got couple of weeks leave.

IVY
Reggie’s not long gone to bed.

SHEILA
Pop up, say hello. *

STANLEY
I’ll see him tomorrow. Any dinner left?

Stanley walks off into the kitchen.

9
INT. LANDING, REGGIE’S HOUSE - NIGHT
In the shadows Reggie is sad and disappointed.

10
EXT. PINNER STREET - DAY
Reggie runs down the street as fast as he can in his school uniform. He passes all the other local kids playing football.

KID
Oi four eyes! You’re in goal.

Reggie ignores them and keeps running.
INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - DAY

Reggie, enters home and stares in wonder at his father as he takes a jazz record out of it’s sleeve, meticulously cleans it with a velvet pad, places it carefully on the turn table and it starts to play.

REGGIE
Dad, is it true you play the piano?
I’m saving to get lessons.

STANLEY
If you want to sit in here you’ll have to stay quiet. I’m listening to my music.

As Stanley listens to the record Reggie watches him for a moment then goes and gets a record from the shelf and proudly presents it to his Dad.

REGGIE
I like this one, Dad, will you play it for me?

He leaps up, snatching the record from Reggie.

STANLEY
Who said you could touch those?
Never, ever, touch my collection without asking.

Stanley carefully puts the record back and turns to look at Reggie. Reggie looks at his father then goes in for a hug. Stanley doesn’t respond but looks uncomfortable and pushes him off.

STANLEY (CONT’D)
Don’t be soft

Reggie runs out.

INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton talks to the counselor but is clearly agitated, angry and confrontational with her.

ELTON
He was always hugging me! It was fucking embarrassing. My dad was passionate about family and music. We’d talk for hours about jazz. I was lucky. I was actually a very happy child.
EXT. GARDEN, REGGIE’S HOUSE – DAY

Reggie throws a tantrum and smashes plant pots with a cricket bat at the bottom of the garden.

REGGIE
It’s not fair. I hate him. I wish
I’d never been born.

Shelia, all glammed up wanders down and watches Reggie. Reggie stops and looks at the destruction he’s caused. He looks at Shelia.

SHEILA
What are you doing?

REGGIE
Nothing.

Shelia lights a cigarette and puffs thoughtfully.

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE – DAY

Reggie seated at the piano. His legs dangle over the edge of the stool. A PIANO TEACHER is there and Shelia watches for a moment. She takes some slimming pills from her handbag, pops a couple and then goes. Reggie learns his scales.

INT. CORRIDOR, REGGIE’S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A slightly drunk Shelia, walks past Reggie’s room. She sees a light on and stops. She opens the door and sees Reggie reading music. Reggie looks up, startled.

SHEILA
What are you still doing up?

REGGIE
Learning. I want to play a song for dad.

SHEILA
Your dad’s gone back to his unit.
Go to sleep.

Sheila turns off the light.

INT. REGGIE’S BEDROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE – NIGHT

The door closes. Reggie sits in the darkness. After a moment a torch comes on and Reggie slowly mimes playing the piano.
As he becomes more animated the sound of Tchaikovsky Piano
certeto No.1 accompanies him.

He stands and points with his torch like a conductor to bring
in a string section. The shafts of the light wave over the
room and we catch glimpses of the orchestra.

We hear strings, brass and woodwind join - as Reggie,
conducts. The whole orchestra plays. Suddenly the door opens
and the light goes on. Reggie freezes and looks up,
terrified. It’s Ivy. She has 2 cakes.

   IVY
   Take no notice. These will make you
   feel better.

She kisses him and goes out. Reggie takes a bite of the cake
then raises his hands to start the orchestra again, as we cut
to:

17  INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - DAY  17

Reggie plays the Concerto effortlessly for real. As we pull
out we see Reggie is now 12 years old. He finishes the piece
with a flourish. The piano teacher smiles.

18  INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE’S HOUSE - EVENING  18

Ivy irons Sheila’s dress. Sheila, her hair in curlers and in
her underwear, reads Vogue. Reggie is by the back door.

   SHEILA
   The Royal Academy of Music!? (beat)
   Pass me those scissors.

Reggie brings her the scissors. Sheila cuts out a pattern for
a skirt.

   SHEILA (CONT’D)
   What d’ya think?

She shows him the picture.

   REGGIE
   The red’s nicer.

   SHEILA
   Is it?

   REGGIE
   It’s only on Saturday’s.
SHEILA
Saturdays! I’ve things to do on the weekends. I can’t just drop everything. You can go on your own.

Ivy smiles at Reggie.

IVY
I’ll take you. Make sure you’re settled in.

SHEILA
Thanks, Mum.

The immaculately dressed Stanley enters and takes in Sheila. There is tension and mistrust in the air.

STANLEY
Where are you off too?

SHEILA
Don’t know. I haven’t decided yet but wherever it is I’m going to have fun. Something you old RAF types don’t do.

IVY
Reg’s piano teacher thinks he’s good enough to get a scholarship.

STANLEY
Really? Has he got that kind of talent?

SHEILA
Course he has. But you’d know that if you took the slightest bit of interest in me and this family.

Sheila goes.

19
I/E. ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC, FOYER – DAY

Ivy stands next to a nervous Reggie, dwarfed by the dusty surroundings. A bearded student pushes past them with a double bass in a case. The place swarms with duffle coated students. Reggie looks around, awed and bewildered as they walk up a grand staircase.

REGGIE
Can we go home?
IVY
Home? There’s no going home! This
is it now. This is your life. You
have to get over this silly
shyness.

REGGIE
But mum says we can’t...

IVY
Life gives you very few chances,
Reggie. This is one of yours. Show
them you’re as good as they are.
Better! Be number one. Everyone’s
scared in the beginning. Play at
being confident. You can do that
can’t you?

REGGIE
Yes. Easy.

IVY
Good. So go on then.

Ivy gives him some change.

IVY (CONT'D)
There’s enough for a bag of chips
and your bus fare home.

20  INT. CONCERT HALL, ROYAL ACADEMY - DAY  20
Reggie wanders into the room transfixed by the music. HELEN
PIENA plays a piece by Mozart unaware that he is there. She
sees him and stops.

HELEN PIENA
Reginald Dwight?

REGGIE
Yes.

HELEN PIENA
Did you bring something to play?

REGGIE
I didn’t know I had to.

HELEN PIENA
Is there anything you could show me
so I can get a sense of where you
are up to?
He sits down, prepares, then plays the opening chord. One note is out. He blushes. He plays it again, this time correctly, then plays the Mozart piece note perfect, then stopping mid-phase exactly where she left off.

**HELEN PIENA (CONT'D)**
Why have you stopped?

**REGGIE**
That’s as far as you got.

Helen looks impressed that Reggie has played it by ear. He beams a cheeky smile, but Helen does not smile back.

**HELEN PIENA**
You might have a good memory but you have an awful lot of work to do. Keep you wrists and back straight and start again.

His smile drops, he realises this is going to be hard work. Helen smiles, she knows she has a real talent on her hands.

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**INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE – DAY**

Stanley, Sheila, Ivy and Reggie all sit at the table in formal silence. A roast chicken on the table.

Sheila, bored and distracted wants be else where. Reggie starts to tap out his piano scales and crunches on a stick of celery.

**STANLEY**
Hands off the table, Reginald. And stop making all that noise.

Sheila scoffs and looks at Reggie like ‘I told you’. An unsure Reggie slowly withdraws his hands. Stanley proceeds to carve.

**REGGIE**
Did you know Mozart wrote his first piece of music at the age of 5?

Reggie is served last with a very small amount. They eat in silence. Sheila pushes her food around the plate. Reggie knows that his family doesn’t work. Ivy sneaks Reggie a piece of chicken and winks at him. The intro music starts: ‘I WANT LOVE’. Stanley gets up from the table and lights his pipe and looks out of the window.
REGGIE (CONT'D)
I want love, but it's impossible.
A man like him, so irresponsible. A
man like him is dead in places.

STANLEY
Other men feel liberated. I can’t
love, shot full of holes. Don’t
feel nothing, I just feel cold.
Don’t feel nothing.

SHEILA
...just old scars. Toughening up
around my heart. I want love on my
own terms. After everything I’ve
learned.

IVY
Me, I carry too much baggage. Oh
god I’ve seen so much traffic. But
I want love...

SHEILA
...just a different kind.

REGGIE
I want love..

STANLEY
..won’t break me down.

SHEILA
Won’t brick me up, won’t fence me
in.

REGGIE
I want a love, that’ll mean
something.

ALL
That’s the love I want, I want
love.

INT. FRED’S CAR, STREET PINNER - DAY
Sheila fumbles in a car with FRED who wears a draped jacket
and has a D.A. hair style. He tries to get her buttons
undone. Suddenly he stops, shocked. Sheila looks round and
sees Reggie by the car window looking at them.

REGGIE
Mum!?
She winds the window down.

SHEILA
Reggie, what are you doing here? *
Snooping around? *

Fred breaks the embarrassment and presents his hand to the stunned Reggie.

FRED
Pleased to meet you, son. I’ve heard a lot about you.

Reggie stares at him.

FRED (CONT’D)
My name’s Fred. I’m a friend of your mum’s.

Reggie looks at Sheila with tears in his eyes then turns and runs.

SHEILA
Reggie!

INT. REGGIE’S BEDROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Reggie sits on his bed. Stanley shouts at Sheila. He is furious and loud.

STANLEY (O.S)
Too bloody right I’ll go! Good! I’m sick of the sight of you. I put a roof over your head. You’ve wanted for nothing. And this builder is what you want now, is he? Got money has he? You love a pound note. You’d drop your knickers for a quid. You self centered, vain, tramp.

SHEILA
Shut up you pig! Get out, just go.

Reggie closes his eyes and puts his hands over his ears to drown out the shouting. He starts singing. ‘La, la, la, la, la, la...’ as in the start of CROCODILE ROCK.’

Heavy footsteps can be heard on the stairs and along the hallway. Reggie’s door is ajar. He watches the shadow of his dad outside his room on the wall. Reggie hopes his Dad will come in. Stanley turns, hesitates. He’s in two minds. Then he decides against it and goes down the stairs.
The front door slams. Close on Reggie’s heartbreak and confusion. He goes to his bedroom window and watches his dad walk off down the street with his suitcase. He doesn’t look back. Reggie sits on his bed and starts to cry. Ivy comes in and sits in a chair by the window.

REGGIE
He didn’t give me a hug goodbye?

IVY
He’s no good at showing affection.

REGGIE
I wish I was somebody else.

It’s dark and she lights a cigarette.

IVY
I heard a song on the radio today I thought you’d like.

Quietly taps her nails on the chair and she starts to gently sing ‘HEARTBREAK HOTEL’.

IVY (CONT’D)
Since my baby left me. I’ve had a new place to dwell. It’s down on the end of a lonely street.
Heartbreak Hotel. My baby’s so lonely my baby’s lonely I could die.

Reggie listens. Slowly he stops crying.

REGGIE
Who sings it?

She sings on.

INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL – DAY

Elton has now removed more of his costume and sits in his vest with just the bottom half of his feather suit on. The rest lies in a crumpled heap on the floor. He looks deflated and the anger is gone. His head and voice are low and he cries. His hands shake.

ELTON
How the fuck do you think I felt!? I was a kid. Heartbroken. People don’t care though, do they?

(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
Anyway, I’d discovered records and rock’n’roll. That was all I cared about.

TRACK INTO ELTON:

U.S TV PRESENTER (V.O.)
And now ladies and gentlemen a rising star of Rock and Roll, all the way from Memphis Tennessee, please welcome Elvis Presley.

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE – DAY

We cut into a T.V. Elvis’ first appearance on an American T.V. Show. Reggie and Ivy sit on the sofa mesmerized by Elvis as he sings ‘Blue Suede Shoes’. Reggie’s eyes are lit up with excitement.

Reggie takes out an exercise book. It is a diary with several columns of lists. There is a list of “Tunes Learnt” and now another one “Records to purchase” – He writes carefully in the ‘Elvis Presley’ column – ‘Blue Suede Shoes’.

Fred and Sheila come in from shopping. Sheila turns down the t.v.

SHEILA
I got you this while I was out. I know you like him.

Sheila pulls out Elvis album from a bag. Reggie can’t believe it.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
He’s quite a dish.

She holds up the cover of the record and they all gaze at the fantastic picture of Elvis in all his glory.

IVY
Ooo. I would.

SHEILA
Mum!

REGGIE
Thank you, Mum. It’s fantastic.

Reggie slowly takes the record. Transfixed. It is obvious that it is in very safe hands with Reggie.
SHEILA
Be careful with it.

FRED
So - are you serious about wanting
to be a rock’n’roller?

REGGIE
Yeah. Course.

FRED
Okay, we should get you the proper
hair cut then.

REGGIE
Can I get it cut like Elvis?

FRED
Course you can.

SHEILA
Enjoy it while it lasts. You’re
like my side of the family. You’ll
be bald as an egg by the time
you’re twenty.

Reggie looks shocked and dismayed. Ivy shakes her head.
Sheila exits with the shopping.

IVY
And a jacket.

FRED
Eh?

IVY
He’ll need a proper jacket.

Ivy holds up the record with Elvis on the front.

FRED
Right.

REGGIE
And shoes.

INT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC - DAY

Reggie is at orchestra rehearsals now dressed in his new
shoes, jacket and hair cut. The rest of the kids are all
dressed a lot more square. A happy Reggie sticks out like a
sore thumb. A concerned Helen Piena looks at him.
EXT. PUB - NIGHT

A home-made sign in the window say: “Tonight: All meat raffle plus Reginald Dwight on piano”

INT. PUB - NIGHT

A run down hotel bar. A seedy BARMAN talks into the mic to a half empty pub. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are all there with a drink. An old upright piano is on the small stage. A man holds up a bag of meat above his head to a small cheer.

BARMAN
Congratulations to Dave, he wins four pork chops, half a pound of prime mince and a string of sausages. Right, now Sheila and Fred’s boy is going to play us a couple of songs on the piano so give him a warm welcome cos he’s only 12 and get’s a bit shy. Reggie Dwight.

Reggie wears his quiff on full attention. He’s decidedly nervous as he walks onto the little stage and sits at the piano. Ivy signals her encouragement. There is an instant feedback through the mic. This gets everybody’s attention.

REGGIE
Hello.

Reggie starts to play ‘STREETS OF LAREDO’. No one is impressed. A bloke puts a pint down on top of the piano and continues to talk loudly to his friend. Reggie is intimidated and stops. He looks at Ivy who winks at him and mouths.

IVY
Play that one I like.

REGGIE
Excuse me. You can’t put that on there.

MAN
Why not?

REGGIE
It’ll get knocked off.

Reggie hits the first chord of ‘SATURDAY NIGHT’S ALRIGHT (FOR FIGHTING)’.
REGGIE (CONT'D)

"It's getting late have you seen my mates..."

As somebody turns to watch Reggie they knock over a woman's beer and it spills down the front of a big bloke. He turns and pushes the wrong person which starts a small shoving match, and a fight breaks out. Someone bumps into Fred and he turns round and whacks them then turns back to Sheila and puts his arm around her as if nothing has happened. Reggie watches as he plays and gets excited by the atmosphere. As the fight builds so does his playing and energy. He grows into a solid and exciting performer and his singing starts to push the energy of the fight. People fly across the room, glasses are smashed, chairs are thrown. Reggie sings on.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"Ma tell me when the boys get back here. It's seven o'clock and I want to rock. Wanna get a belly full of beer"

Reggie ducks as a chair flies over the piano. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are in the middle of the chaos with their gin and tonics and still smile encouragingly at Reggie.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"My old man's drunker than a barrel full of monkey's. And my old lady she don't care. My sister looks cute in her braces and her boots. A handful of grease in her hair"

Two men, now on top of the piano, fight and Ivy hits them with her handbag. Reggie has to dive this way and that to avoid being hit but plays without missing a beat.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"So don't give us none of your aggravation. We've had it with yer discipline. Saturday night's alright for fighting. Get a little action in".

Suddenly someone has a chair and is about to crash it down onto the piano when Reggie leaps out of the window.

EXT. PUB/BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Reggie emerges from the pub in the middle of an ally which he runs down. He come out in the street and jumps over the tops of cars - he boots someone who tries to attack him, whilst, of course, singing in perfect time.
REGGIE
“Get about as oiled as a diesel train. Gonna set this dance alight. Cause Saturday night’s alright for fightin’. Saturday night’s alright, alright”.

Reggie escapes by climbing through a hole in a wooden fence. **REGGIE is now seventeen years old.**

30  **EXT. FUN FAIR – NIGHT**

Reggie comes out into a huge fun fair with big bright lights and fast moving action. The bumper cars are close by and different gangs hang out here. Teddy boys, rockers, mods, Beatniks, Jamaicans, Indians, mums and dads with their kids. All walks of British 60’s life. Reggie runs and ducks through the legs of the bigger kids as they come together and carry on the fight and dance. The bumper cars are packed with people and Reggie laughs as he hangs on to one of the car.

REGGIE
“We’re packed pretty tight in here tonight. I’m looking for a dolly who’ll see me right. I may use a little muscle to get what I need. I sink a little drink and shout she’s with me..”

Reggie jumps off and runs and ducks through another hole in the fence.

31  **EXT. PUB/BACK ALLEY – NIGHT**

Reggie runs along the street and a gang of mods on scooters come towards him. He turns and goes the other way as the mods sing:

MODS
“A couple of sounds that we really like. Are the sound of a switchblade and a motorbike. We’re a juvenile product of the working class. Who’s best friend floats in the bottom of a glass”.

Reggie flies out of the alley.

REGGIE
“So don’t give us none of your aggravation. We’ve had it with yer discipline”.
White Shooting

Reggie sees the brightly lit pub and dives back in through the window.

32
INT. PUB - NIGHT

Reggie dives across the bar and lands on the piano stool and plays on. He has a band backing him called ‘Bluesology’ all dressed identically. Slim fitted, dark clothes and hush puppies. The pub is half full. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are there and politely clap.

REGGIE
“Saturday night’s alright for fightin’. Get a little action in.
Saturday! Saturday! Saturday!
Saturday! Saturday! Saturday
night’s alright.”

The number finishes with a flourish. Everyone cheers. Reggie beams back at them.

33
INT. PUB - NIGHT

Reggie and the band BOBBY, CYRIL and ELTON DEAN pack up. A tall thin man leans against a wall and smokes. DAVE GODIN.

GODIN
Good show tonight boys. You look like you know how to enjoy yourselves. How would you like to make two quid a week? Each!

Elton Dean whistles.

ELTON DEAN
Go on.

GODIN
Dave Godin, promoter of the soul music review. I’ve got 3 new American acts doing a tour of England and they all need back up.

BOBBY
We’re not a backing band!

REGGIE
What’s soul music?

GODIN
Music for people who feel it in their heart.

(MORE)
GODIN (CONT'D)
What I’m looking for is a band that
have got music running through
their souls. It’s about pain and
love and heartbreak.

BOBBY
You what?

GODIN
Forget all this Rock n Roll stuff.
Wilson and the Twilights. The
Bluebells. The sound of the future.
Your future.

ELTON DEAN
Why don’t they have their own band?

GODIN
Enough talk! You’re obviously tough
negotiators. Three pounds a week
plus room and board.

Beat. Godin hands Reggie his card and smiles enigmatically.

GODIN (CONT'D)
Think about it. I’ll need to know
by tomorrow lunch time. It’s six
months. So if you’re up for it
swing by the office, pick up the
records. You’ll have a week to
learn twenty songs.

Reggie takes the card but a worrying thought comes over
Reggie.

INT. HALLWAY, ROYAL ACADEMY – DAY
Reggie walks along and looks unsure of himself. Other
students come and go and some say hello. He nods back but is
distracted. He stops outside a door, paces for a bit then
enters.

INT. RECITAL HALL, ROYAL ACADEMY – DAY
Reggie sits next to Helen Piena at the piano.

HELEN PIENA
Why are you so distracted, Reg? The
‘Puccini’ recital is next week.
Being an accompanist is very
important and you’re obviously not
practicing.
REGGIE
I’m not going to be able to do the recital. My bands been offered six months touring.

HELEN PIENA
You’re throwing away all your hard work to dedicate your time to playing rock and roll in dirty pubs? Do you think that’s a good use of your talent?

REGGIE
I don’t want to just play dead people’s music.

HELEN PIENA
I beg your pardon?

REGGIE
Anyway, if Puccini were alive today, he’d be playing rock’n’roll.

HELEN PIENA
You’ve got a great future here. The Royal Philharmonic is a very real possibility for you.

Helen Piena plays the intro Nessun Dorma.

REGGIE
I need to do this. I love rock’n’roll...

HELEN PIENA
Passion is important, Reggie but think it through. If you give up your place here you won’t be able to just walk back in when things don’t work out. Can you make any money playing this kind of music? There’s no stability in it. I like rock’n’roll to but I wouldn’t gamble my whole future on it. I can’t allow it.

Helen plays ‘Nessun Dorma’ as Reggie gets up and walks out. She doesn’t look back but knows he is gone.

35A INT. REGGIE’S BEDROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE
Reggie enters with a stack of records and throws them on the bed and sits.
There is a shelf in the room that has a few records on. Reggie puts the new disks on the shelf. He takes one and reverentially puts it on his record player.

Intro music starts for ‘BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS OF HEARTACHE’ by THE BLUEBELLS. The song plays over.

EXT. PUB/BACK ALLEY – EVENING

Reggie carries his electric keyboards, the rest of the band load equipment into a van. Godin smokes and the boys are excited as they get in the van.
INT. NORTHERN CLUB - NIGHT

Montage - as ‘BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS OF HEARTACHE’ carries on:

WILSON out front singing like a pro. Reggie plays some great organ and looks at Wilson doing his thing and the crowd lapping it up. He’s a master at work. Reggie watches his every move, loving it and learning. Wilson is replaced by another great, DIANA and the BLUEBELLS all in beautiful tight fitting gold dresses. Again Reggie watches in awe from behind the keyboard.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - NIGHT

Reggie and the rest of the band are crammed in at the back. They are happy and the energy is high. The laugh and smoke.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Reggie on stage with the band. The TWILIGHTS sing and dance. Reggie is at the back but he and the band all enjoy playing. One of the singers, RICHARD smiles and winks at Reggie and he smiles back.

INT. ANOTHER DIVE - NIGHT

In the corridor leading to the stage, Reggie passes Wilson’s dressing room and sees through the door. Wilson is being injected with heroin in his arm by his girlfriend. Wilson sees Reggie, smiles and nods at him.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

On stage Reggie plays while he watches Wilson sing. He works hard and sweat runs down his face and back. His shirt is soaked through.

INT. BACKSTAGE, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Reggie packs away his organ as the other guys are surrounded by dolly birds. Richard takes off his shirt and Reggie stares at him. Richard catches him looking and holds Reggie’s eye.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAY

Reggie and the guys are all dressed differently and now have more shinny suits on.
They smoke and drink and are growing up fast. Bobby hands out some pills which they all take. *

44  INT. ANOTHER CLUB - NIGHT

They are all in different costumes. The Bluebells sing.

45  INT. CLUB SIDE OF STAGE - NIGHT

Reggie waits to go on. Richard comes up to him and they watch The Bluebells perform for a bit. As the girls finish Richard turns to Reggie and suddenly kisses him on the lips on quite a sensual way.

    RICHARD
    Have a good show.

Reggie is in shock by the thrill he has just experienced.

    REGGIE
    Thank you.

Richard laughs and walks out on stage.

46  INT. REGGIE’S BEDROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Reggie puts some records on the shelves which are much fuller. He flops down on his bed and stares at the ceiling.

47  INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Reggie and Wilson sit next to each other nursing drinks. The other American acts, Godin and the rest of Bluesology drink and laugh with girls they’ve picked up.

    WILSON
    What’s up, Reggie?

Reggie watches them and broods.

    REGGIE
    How does a fat boy with glasses from Pinner, called Reggie Dwight get to be a soul man?

    WILSON
    Write some songs.

    REGGIE
    Easier said than done.
WILSON
Of course it is. Every song I write
is part of me. What’s in your heart
when you play?

REGGIE
Dunno – everything. It’s where I
feel I’m not alone.

WILSON
There you go. Real poetic, kid. Set
that to music.

Wilson considers Reggie for a moment.

WILSON (CONT'D)
I’m a skinny, black, kid from
Detroit who’s real name is Rodney
Jones. I played roadside joints for
ten years before I realised what I
had to do.

REGGIE
What? Change your name?

WILSON
Not just your name. You have to
kill the person you’re born to be
in order become the person you want
to be.

INT. CLUB – NIGHT

Wilson is doing his show. Reggie is once again at the back
but watches closely. The backing singers spin round and as
they do Richard makes eye contact.

EXT. MOTORWAY – NIGHT

The transit van drive down the motorway.

INT. TRANSIT VAN – NIGHT

As they bump along the motorway a dejected Reggie looks at
the band and the cramped conditions. Cyril smokes and looks
untroubled as he pisses into a milk bottle and Bobby drinks a
beer. Reggie picks up the NME and looks at the back pages. He
spots something then rips out an ad. Cyril’s piss over flows
and runs down the middle of the van getting on Reggie’s
brothel creepers.
REGGIE
Aw fucking hell, Cyril.

Cyril laughs. Reggie broods and rereads the ad in his hand.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Oi, Elton.

Elton Dean looks up.

ELTON DEAN
Yeah?

REGGIE
I’m going to change my name. I’m thinking of calling myself Elton Dean.

ELTON DEAN
But that’s my name.

REGGIE
I know. What d’ya think?

ELTON DEAN
I think, fuck off!

The other two laugh at Reggie who goes back to his ad.

Dick James MUSIC PUBLISHING: Wants Talent. Artistes/ Composers/ singers/ Musicians. Call or write to RAY WILLIAMS. Denmark St. London. Tel. Mayfair 7362

50A INT. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY
Elton smiles to himself at the memory.

ELTON
To be honest, I couldn’t stand being at the back any more. After just six weeks I was looking for my way out. You know what they say, “Hell is for other people”. I wasn’t cut out for sharing the back of an old van with people who didn’t care about their futures.
51  EXT. DENMARK STREET - DAY

Reggie, dressed more flamboyantly than usual, walks down Denmark Street - London’s Tin Pan Alley - with its music publishers and guitar shops. He stops at a doorway. DJ Music Publishing. He checks the address from an ad in the NME.

52  INT. DJ MUSIC OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY

In reception a Mary Quant type receptionist, MARY is at the desk. Reg tries to look very cool and important.

MARY
Can I help you?
REGGIE
I’ve come to see Mr. Williams.
About the ‘Talent wanted’ ad.

MARY
Name?

REGGIE
Reginald Dwight.

Mary girl laughs.

MARY
Reginald!?

REGGIE
Yeah! What?

MARY
That’s my grandad’s name.

Reggie blushes as Mary smirks and picks up the phone.

INT. RAY WILLIAM’S OFFICE – DAY

Reggie stands and looks at the pictures of The Beatles. Gold records etc. Ray Williams a blonde Adonis of 21, has his feet on the desk.

REGGIE
I’ve been gigging for years now.

RAY
Piano players I’ve got. Ten a penny, mate.

REGGIE
I sing too.

RAY
What sort of stuff?

REGGIE
Anything, rock, soul, country and western.

Reggie sits at the piano and plays the opening notes of ‘Streets of Laredo’.

RAY
Fucking hell! I’m going to shoot the next piano player who sings ‘Streets of Laredo’.
Reggie’s hands hover over the piano keys.

REGGIE
I’ve written songs too. I’m good at tunes but I just haven’t figured out what to write about yet.

Reggie plays the opening chords to ‘Candle In The Wind’.

RAY
That’s good. What’s that called?

REGGIE
It hasn’t got a title. I just made it up.

RAY
What did you say your name was?

REGGIE
...Elton...

RAY
Elton what?

Reggie looks at a picture on the wall of The Beatles.

REGGIE
John?

*From here on REGGIE will now be ELTON*

RAY
Alright, Elton John the piano player. Leave your details with Mary at reception.

ELTON
Give me a chance Mr. Williams. I’ll do anything.

Ray sees a pile of envelopes on his desk and grabs two or three but then throws one at random to Elton.

RAY
Tell you what. See if there’s anything interesting in this and set it to music.

It sails through the air. Everything slows down, music plays and a light hits the envelope as it flies majestically to Elton’s hands.
RAY (CONT'D)
Now fuck off.

INT. LANCASTER GRILL, LONDON – DAY

Elton pours over the pile of handwritten lyrics: The year of the Teddy Bear, The Swan Queen of Laughing Lake, Tartan Coloured Lady and A Dandelion Dies in the Wind. He finds the covering letter. He sees the name and address: “Bernie Taupin, Matkin Farm, Owmby-by-Spital, Lincolnshire”.

Elton looks at his watch. He wears a Sixties t-shirt, a fur jacket, tight pants and his hair is long. He has a cup of tea and watches expectantly as the straight laced people come and go. A waitress comes and puts another tea in front of Elton.

WAITRESS
We close soon.

Then through the door comes a good looking young man who carries a copy of NME. From the way he’s dressed it’s obvious that he’s a country boy. They look at each other.

ELTON
Bernie Taupin?

BERNIE
Yeah. You must be Elton?

Bernie smiles and Elton is instantly smitten.

ELTON
Yeah. Actually, that’s my stage name.

A nervous Bernie is impressed by this cool Londoner.

BERNIE
You can tell me your real name when we get to know each other better.

Elton and Bernie sit opposite each other. A beat.

ELTON
I was thinking...

BERNIE
Have you ever been...

ELTON
Sorry.

BERNIE
No, after you.

They both smile.
ELTON
I like your lyrics.

BERNIE
Cheers. The tape you sent me is great. Do you write a lot?
ELTON
I’m on tour at the moment so I don’t get as much time as I’d like...

Bernie sees that there is a page mixed in with the lyrics he sent and tries to take it back.

BERNIE
Oh, that shouldn’t be in there. I sent that by mistake.

Elton pulls it back.

ELTON
No, that’s really good. I wrote a tune to this one. It just flowed out when I read it.

BERNIE
Skyline Pigeon?

ELTON
Yeah, I could hear the whole tune in my head. Everything was there and I could see all the notes and I had to get it out. My fingers couldn’t work fast enough to keep up with my brain...

Bernie smiles and Elton blushes.

ELTON (CONT’D)
Do you ever get that?

BERNIE
Not really, no. But I could write some more if you’d like and, you know send them to you.

ELTON
My real name is Reg Dwight.

BERNIE
Cool. Sounds like a cowboy’s name. All I ever wanted to do was to be a cowboy. Do you like Country and Western, Reg? Have you ever heard ‘Streets of Laredo’ by Marty Robbins?

Elton sings.
ELTON
As I walked out on the streets of Laredo. As I walked out on Laredo one day.

BERNIE
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped in white linen, wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.

ELTON/BERNIE
"I can see by your outfit that you are a cowboy." These words he did say as I boldly walked by.

BERNIE
Come an' sit down beside me an' hear my sad story.
ELTON
I'm shot in the breast an' I know I must die.

They both smile and the song segways from 'Streets of Laredo' into 'Skyline Pigeon'.

Elton knows he’s met a soul mate. Bernie and Elton talk more and more animatedly as the song carries on. Elton is clearly blown away by Bernie. They talk and drink cups of tea until they are thrown out when the cafe closes.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - EVENING

Elton and Bernie walk through London as the city goes to sleep and look at the window displays at all the things they don’t have but plan to one day buy.

INT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

They sit on a bench under a street light and talk.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

They walk, talk and laugh more.

EXT. LANCASTER GRILL - DAWN

Elton and Bernie part ways. They shake hands and Elton goes in the cafe and Bernie walks off.

INT. BERNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

At his desk Bernie writes on an envelope. It is addressed to ‘Reg’. He pulls out some pages from his note book, folds them and puts them inside.

INT. REGGIE’S HOUSE - DAY

Elton sits at the piano surrounded by scraps of paper, letters and notes. Fred comes in with some post and hands him Bernie’s letter. He opens it and puts Bernie lyrics on the piano and starts to compose.
INT. RAY WILLIAM’S OFFICE - DAY

DICK JAMES a large 60 year old bald man smokes a cigar and sits at Ray’s desk with his feet up. He looks at Elton, Bernie and Ray. Elton at a piano finishes singing ‘Skyline pigeon’.

ELTON
Fly away, skyline pigeon fly
Towards the dreams. You’ve left so very, so very far behind.
DICK
Am I supposed to be impressed?

RAY
It’s catchy, Dick. These guys are special. I’ve got an instinct for these things.

DICK
Alright, don’t break your neck sucking your own cock.

Dick walks round to the front of the desk, sits on it and stares at them. Dick looks at Elton then at Bernie and sizes them up.

DICK (CONT’D)
Maybe we should put these two into a little beat combo. They write, they sing, blah, blah. He’s the good looking one. Make him the singer.

Elton is hurt and embarrassed.

BERNIE
Hold on, I’m tone deaf. We write together but Elton sings the songs.

Dick looks at Ray and shakes his head.

DICK
No offense but he’s not exactly the look kids are going crazy for. He’s a back room boy.

RAY
They’re writing a lot of good tunes, Dick.

DICK
Okay tiger. Are you flat mates?

BERNIE
We live with our mum’s. I write the lyrics, send them to Elton and he adds the music.

RAY
Whoever heard of song writers not living and working together. Lennon and McCartney are inseparable.
Elton looks at Bernie who shrugs. Dick picks up the music to one of their songs and looks at it.

**DICK**
How many songs have you got?

**ELTON**
Loads. More than thirty!?  

**DICK**
Play one.

Elton plays and sings ‘Daniel’

**DICK (CONT’D)**
Depressing. Another one.

Elton tries again with ‘ Philadelphia Freedom’

**DICK (CONT’D)**
What the fuck’s that about!?

‘That’s Why They Call It The Blues’

**DICK (CONT’D)**
Are you taking the piss?

Elton plays ‘Sad Songs’.

**DICK (CONT’D)**
Alright! I’ve heard enough. Sounds like 99% of them are shit. It’s the 1% I’m interested in. Ray says you’re an investment but he knows fuck all. You’re both a couple of pricks as far as I can tell so quit that backing band nonsense, find a place to work together and write me tunes that gray haired old tramps will whistle in the street. You never know, one day you might have enough for an album. Do that and I’ll put you on ten quid a week.

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60  EXT. NOTTING HILL - DAY

A dirty, well used 1960’s farm Land Rover with a canvas back drives down a residential street.

61  INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Bernie drives and Elton looks worried.
BERNIE
Why is this suddenly a problem?
It’s rent free.

ELTON
So is my mum’s. It’s alright for you, it’s me she fancies for some strange reason.

BERNIE
She was just being friendly. Anyway she’s a good looking bird.

ELTON
You go out with her then! She kept stroking my hair. It made me feel uncomfortable.

BERNIE
Fucking hell, Elton! Not your hair again! Last week you were all up for moving in.

ELTON
That was before I met her.

BERNIE
We need to be closer to the center of town. Soho, not fucking Pinner.

Elton fumes in silence.

EXT. ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

The Land Rover has parked in front of a very run down terraced house. The street is lively with many people and kids about. Reggae music plays from a window somewhere. Elton and Bernie carry boxes of belongings up to the front door. ARABELLA with two small dogs on her lap sits on the steps next to CLINT, a rasta and ARTHUR a very small bloke, smoking a big joint.

ARABELLA
Ah, my wonderful new lodgers. They’re struggling rock stars.

Arabella kisses Elton.

BERNIE (TO ARTHUR)
Hi, I’m Bernie.
ARThUR
Whoever heard of a rock star
called, Bernie?

ELTON
Watch it, mate.

Arthur stands up. As he’s on the top step he comes eye to eye with Elton and they square up to each other.

ARThUR
Yeah? You going to do something
about it?

ELTON
I will if I have too.

Clint laughs.

CLINT
Calm yourself, Arthur.

Arabella gets up and leads Elton and Bernie inside.

ARABELLA
(To Elton) I was just telling Clint
about the time I got arrested in
Afghanistan for smoking pot outside
of a Mosque. They were very
understanding at the police station
though. You two are going to love
this place. I’ve got a real,
Indian, Buddhist monk living next
door, from Liverpool.

INT. ARABELLA’S FLAT HALLWAY, ALL SAINTS ROAD – DAY

Arabella shows them around the flat. The walls are covered
with her shit art work, easels, paints, and a potters wheel
clutter the hallway. Think everything that was wrong about
the 60’s and this place should be full of it. Arabella shows
them a room with just a single bed and a lot of junk art.

ARABELLA
This is your room. Some of my 2nd
year course work is still in there
and Clint’s borrowed the other
mattress but we’ll get it sorted
out soon enough.

ELTON
I can go on the sofa.
ARABELLA
Absolutely not. You can bunk in with me. I have a huge bed.

Elton looks angry at Bernie who shrugs his shoulders. Arabella grabs Elton by the hand and leads them into the living room.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)
It’ll be like an ashram in India. Have you ever been to Goa? We should hitch hike there this summer.

ELTON
I think I’d be happier on the sofa.

ARABELLA
Nonsense. Let’s celebrate.

INT. KITCHEN, ALL SAINTS ROAD – DAY

Arabella pops some champagne and pours it into mugs.

ARABELLA
Here’s to us.

They drink.

BERNIE
Come on, let’s get some music on.

ARABELLA
Oh god. You can’t make loud noise in the flat. Livy has sensitive ears.

Elton looks in horror at Bernie.

ELTON
Livy the dog? We have to be able to play music. That’s why we moved in here.

ARABELLA
Oh, don’t be a nuisance. Come on, time for you to see our room. You can show me your intricate finger work.

Arabella smiles a lascivious smile. She grabs Elton by his collar and pulls him towards the bedroom.
ELTON
But it’s only six o’clock.

Elton looks back in horror as Bernie is left with the champagne. Livy licks Bernie’s feet.

INT. A CLUB – NIGHT

Elton and Bernie are having a drink after the show. They are deep in conversation. Wilson, Richard, Godin and a few of the other Americans are at the next table. They are clearly talking about Elton and Bernie. They know each other well now and the friendship between them all is warm and good natured. Wilson looks over.

GODIN
Two weeks to go Reggie, you gonna miss us?

Elton smiles.

ELTON
Sure. I’ll be writing to you every five days. And the name’s Elton.

WILSON
What’s your plans now, Elton?

ELTON
Not too sure. We’ve written a lot of songs. Enough for an album.

BERNIE
He’s probably going to get married too.

All the guys laugh and give each other a knowing look.

WILSON
What?

ELTON
Arabella wants to get married.

WILSON

RICHARD
What about the fact you’re a fag?
BERNIE
A what?

RICHARD
You’re little friend is a homosexual.

A worried Elton looks at Bernie who is shocked and a bit confused.

ELTON
I’ve got a girlfriend.

Wilson smiles and shakes his head.

WILSON
When’s that ever stopped anybody?

The penny drops for Bernie.

BERNIE
Are you?

Elton is scared. Caught.

ELTON
I don’t know. Does it matter?

Bernie shrugs and laughs a little.

BERNIE
Not to me it doesn’t.

Relieved Elton smiles at his friend.

BERNIE (CONT’D)
But it might do to Arabella.

ELTON
Oh fuck.

They both drink.

66

EXT. ALL SAINTS ROAD - EARLY MORNING

Elton and Bernie are completely “shitfaced”. They stagger to the door trying not to laugh too loud.

BERNIE
Sssssssshhhhh!

ELTON
Sssssssshhhhh!
Elton holds the key but falls over the bin. Bernie tries to help Elton up but Elton pulls him down. They are laughing till suddenly a wave of clarity comes over Elton.

ELTON (CONT'D)
What am I going to do, Bernie?

Bernie stops laughing and looks in Elton’s eyes. Elton hiccups again and breaks the mood.

BERNIE
You’re going to tell her.

ELTON
It’ll break her heart.

BERNIE
I’m not sure she has one.

They burst into hysterics again. Suddenly the window opens. Arabella is in her nightdress. Both Bernie and Elton sit up like two schoolboys.

ARABELLA
Will you keep the noise down! You’ll wake the whole bloody street.

Elton looks in despair at Bernie as Arabella slams the window shut.

67

EXT. ROOF, ALL SAINTS ROAD - SUNRISE

Elton and Bernie are on the roof that over looks the city with a bottle of champagne. Their little party not over. Elton dangles his feet over the edge. Bernie is up, drunk and animated.

BERNIE
What are you talking about!? There’s so much we’ve got to do. Worlds to conquer. They’re great fucking songs! People keep asking who’s singing the demos. You have got an amazing voice, Reg. It’s what I hear when I write. Something special happens when you sing our songs.

Bernie sits next to Elton.
ELTON
You’ve had too much to drink. You heard what Dick thinks. He said my hands are like midget boxers.

BERNIE
Fuck what Dick thinks. It’s time for you to be out front.

ELTON
I’m not an artist.

BERNIE
Yes you are.

Elton looks at Bernie then puts a hand on his knee. In their drunken state there is a moment of tenderness and friendship between them. Bernie puts his hand on Elton’s knee. Elton leans in for a kiss.

BERNIE (CONT’D)
Reg, I love you mate, but I’m sorry that’s never gonna happen.

Elton takes his hand away.

INT. BERNIE’S ROOM, ALL SAINTS ROAD – MORNING
Bernie sits on his bed writing. After a moment he stops and sniffs the air.

INT. KITCHEN, ALL SAINTS ROAD – MORNING
Bernie’s POV: Elton is lying on the floor with his head in the gas oven, on a pillow, with the gas on. The window is wide open.

BERNIE
What are you doing?

ELTON
Go away. I’m trying to kill myself.

BERNIE
(of the pillow)
What’s that?

ELTON
I didn’t want to hurt my head.

BERNIE
But the window’s open.
ELTON
I know, it absolutely stinks.

Bernie turns off the gas.

BERNIE
What about our joint publishing deal?

ELTON
It’s alright, I’ve left everything to you.

Bernie picks up a will scribbled in biro as Livy runs in and starts licking Elton’s face.

BERNIE
Even the Bob Dylan albums?

Arabella appears at the door

ARABELLA
What are you doing

BERNIE
He’s going to kill himself.

ARABELLA
Oh for godsake, what about the wedding?

Elton sits up bumping his head.

ELTON
It’s all off. I’m never going to marry you. I can’t.

ARABELLA
But I’ve sent the invitations to the printers. And I’m pregnant with your baby.

ELTON
No, you’re not. We’ve never even had sex properly.

ARABELLA
Haven’t we? Yes we have!

ELTON
We haven’t got a proper relationship at all. I wouldn’t marry you if you were the last person on earth.
CLOSE UP on the shocked and horrified Arabella. Then, like a dam bursting she lets out a scream of rage. The whole house seems to shake. Elton looks at Bernie.

BERNIE
Oh shit.

EXT. NOTTING HILL ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

Elton and Bernie are throwing bags in the back of the Land Rover as quick as they can. The boxes of records and suitcases are already loaded. Arabella can be heard screaming and shouting from the house. A few neighbors are hanging out and watching. Elton goes to run back in.

BERNIE
Come on. Where you going now?

ELTON
My keyboards are still in there!

Suddenly Elton’s electric piano comes flying out the window and smashes on the road.

BERNIE
Not anymore.

ELTON
She’s killed my piano.

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Elton and Bernie sit in the car parked at the side of the road. Bernie is trying to sort through the lyrics and papers that Arabella threw out. They are in the middle of a row.

ELTON
You can write anywhere but it was my keyboards that got destroyed! We’re not that desperate!

BERNIE
Yes, we are! We don’t have a choice.

ELTON
We can live in the car until we find something.
BERNIE
Are you mad? There’s no fucking piano in the car! How are we supposed to work?

ELTON
I’m not doing it! She’s a fucking nightmare. You’re always going on about how we need space to create. She’ll eat up your space in a fucking heart beat with her craziness. We’ll get nothing done and go mad in the process. You can go live there but I’ll be fucked if I am.

71 EXT. REGGIE’S HOUSE – EVENING
Sheila opens the door to a bedraggled Elton and Bernie, they stand with their things.

SHEILA
I knew you’d be back. You’ll have to pay rent. I’m not made of money.

72 INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE’S HOUSE – MORNING
Bernie, in his dressing gown, scribbles amongst the debris of a full English breakfast. Fred reads the paper. A listless Elton wanders in and sits. Sheila puts a fresh pot of tea on the table.

SHEILA
Get dressed, Reggie
ELTON
Elton.

SHEILA
Whatever you’re calling yourself, * I’ll not have you moping around here all day.

ELTON
We’re song writing.

FRED
Looks like it’s going well.

Bernie hands Elton a piece of paper which he starts to read.

ELTON
(to himself) * There’s egg on this.

Bernie closely watches Elton read the lyrics as Sheila goes on.

SHEILA
I want you out of here looking for a proper job. Do you have any idea what it takes to feed and clothe three grown men who are all of working age. It’s like a doss house around here and I’m the only one who does anything. You all just rely on me to take care of everything for you....

BERNIE
I’d better go take a shave. *

Elton in a bit of a trance gets up and goes. *

72A   INT. BATHROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - MORNING   72A *

Bernie gets out his razor and foam and starts to shave. He * hears Elton at the piano playing. It stops him from what he * is doing and he wanders out and down to:

73    INT. LIVING ROOM, REGGIE’S HOUSE - MORNING    73 *

Bernie comes and stands in the door way as Elton composes. * Elton goes slowly but when he gets to the chorus he has * gained a fluency of expression that just allows ‘Your Song’ to flow.
ELTON
It's a little bit funny, this feeling inside.
(MORE)
White Shooting 44.

ELTON (CONT'D)
I’m not one of those who can easily
hide, I don’t have much money but
boy, if I did. I’d buy a big house
where we both could live.

By the time he’s started the second verse, Bernie is in the
doorway, listening. Elton now has the tune for the verse and
sings it brilliantly - Bernie’s lyrics are a platonic love
song to Elton but Elton’s emotional singing is directly to
Bernie.

ELTON (CONT'D)
If I was a sculptor but then again,
no. Or a man who makes potions in a
traveling show. Oh, I know it’s not
much but it’s the best I can do. My
gift is my song. And this one’s for
you.

Bernie stands stunned and moved. A life changing moment when
something’s come together.

ELTON (CONT'D)
And you can tell everybody this is
your song. It may be quite simple
but now that it’s done. I hope you
don’t mind/ I hope you don’t mind.
That I put down in words. How
wonderful life is while you’re in
the world.

74 INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY 74

Elton plays ‘Your Song’. Engineers mesmerized and Ray is in
tears as the song finishes.

ELTON
Was that alright?

RAY
It was beautiful.

75 INT. RAY WILLIAM’S OFFICE - DAY 75

Elton and Bernie sit on a large sofa. Dick James bursts in as
Ray Williams opens a bottle of champagne.

DICK
I love it! Best thing I’ve heard
since ‘Let it be’. Trans-fucking-
Atlantic. I always knew you could
do it.
ELTON
Our record sales are not exactly
golden.

DICK
No, they’re shit but people don’t
know what they want until you tell
them. Trust me. First off, I’m
putting you on a three album deal!

ELTON
Three!?

DICK
A year. And I’ve got you a few
nights at the Troubadour. Doug
Weston is an old friend.

ELTON
Hang on! The Troubadour?

RAY
It’s a really cool folk club in
L.A.

BERNIE
We know what it is!

ELTON
Let’s not be too hasty. I’ll need a
backing band.

DICK
Ray, book some good session boys to
play back up.

RAY
Will do.

DICK
It’s time to do something bold!
I’ve invested a ton of money into
you boys.

BERNIE
Well, not really

DICK
The song is winner. At least it
could be. Granted America’s a
gamble and if you fuck it up I’ll
kill you. Ray’ll go too and keep
and eye on you.

(MORE)
DICK (CONT'D)
Get yourself some new clothes, something flashy, put on a great fucking show and don’t kill yourself with drugs.
Elton looks worried but Bernie can hardly contain himself.

INT. MISS. DIRECTION SHOP – DAY

Close on a winged platform boot that PETE the big, fat owner of the shop shows Elton and Bernie.

PETE
Is this the kind of thing you mean?

ELTON
I love them. I’ll take good care of them. Thanks for all this, Tommy.

PETE
That’s alright. You can pay me back when you’re rich and famous.

Bernie takes the shoe.

BERNIE
Can you even play the piano in those?

PETE
These are extremely stylish boots of my own design. Very original.

BERNIE
You’ll look like a tit.

ELTON
I need to make an impact, Bernie. It’s America. It’s all about being cool. It’s going to be just me and a piano out there. It’s easy for you. This whole thing is a bad idea.

BERNIE
Elton! You’ll be okay.

ELTON
Fuck.

Beat.

PETE
Come with me. This is where I keep all the really cool stuff. This is a whole new world man.
Pete leads them to the back of the shop where all the wild, wonderful and whacky things hang. The rails close in around them.

I/E. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - DAY

Close up of Elton and Bernie looking out the windows bemused. We pull out to see they are actually in Los Angeles. Ray also looks out at the palm trees and the beautiful girls and boys of L.A.

EXT. TROUBADOUR - DAY

Elton, Bernie and Ray get out of the Lincoln in front of a rundown old bar on Santa Monica Blvd.

INT. TROUBADOUR - DAY

Elton, Bernie, Ray and the band look at the club. It is small and dark. A group of young women and men hang around by the bar. DOUG WESTON the owner greets them and shows them around. He is larger than life, wears a cowboy hat and has a large Bowie knife on his belt.

DOUG
Monday nights are always crazy here. It’s going to be packed later

ELTON
It’s different from what I expected. A lot smaller.

DOUG
Size is everything my friend. Neil Young was here last week and there were people around the block. Fantastic. The best night ever.

Elton looks worried.

BERNIE
Cool hat.

DOUG
I won it in a bet with Dave Crosby. Take it!

BERNIE
Thanks...

Doug sticks his hat on Bernie’s head.
DOUG
If you want anything to drink the girls will take care of you. Hey Joni!

Bernie looks over to the bar and a girl who looks a lot like JONI MITCHELL smiles.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Give the guys whatever they want. They just flew in from England! Their arms are really tired.

The girls all laugh at Doug’s lame joke. Doug puts his arm round Elton’s shoulder.

DOUG (CONT'D)
We’re stoked you’re here, man. Love the album – just love it. You’re going to be great, man. Let me show you backstage.

INT. TROUBADOUR DRESSING ROOMS – NIGHT

Elton, Ray and the band all squashed into one tiny dressing room ready but excited. Elton is putting on the red jump suit, a sparkly bow tie and his first pair of platform shoes with wings on the heals.

BAND MEMBER
Bloody hell, Elton what are you wearing?

Elton turns round and in the mirror his name is written in sequins on the back of the red jumpsuit.

ELTON
My stage gear.

Bernie rushes in.

BERNIE
Reg! Neil Diamond’s at the bar talking to Leon Russell and half the Beach Boys.

ELTON
Oh Jesus shit.

INT. TROUBADOUR BATHROOM – NIGHT

Bernie stands outside a cubicle door.
BERNIE
You’re over reacting.

We hear Elton retch.

ELTON
They’re the geniuses of American music. There is no way I’m going in front of that lot.

BERNIE
You can’t back out now! They’re all waiting.

ELTON
I don’t give a shit.

Suddenly Ray bursts in and busts open the cubicle door dragging Elton out.

RAY
You’ve signed a contract and Dick has paid your fucking airfare - get out there and play you little bastard!

INT. TROUBADOUR - NIGHT

Close up of Elton in the half light at the side of the stage. He sweats, looks ill and terrified by the ordeal. The camera pushes in on him as we hear Doug.

DOUG (O.S.)

Small applause. We follow Elton in slow motion as he goes on stage. He looks out at the audience they seem a vast blur. He sits at the piano but freezes. A few people at the front look at him but his eye moves to people who chat at the bar. He hears the glasses clink and the hot girls and boys who chat oblivious to him. He sits at the piano. The room goes quiet. We can hear him breathe and his heart pound. Suddenly he kicks the piano stool off the stage and launches into ‘CROCODILE ROCK’...

ELTON
I remember when I was young. Me and Suzie had so much fun. Holding hands and skimming stones.

(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
Had an old gold Chevy and a place
of my own. But the biggest kick I
ever got. Was doing a thing called
the Crocodile rock. While the other
kids were rocking round the clock.
We were hopping and bopping to the
Crocodile Rock.

Elton leaps about as he plays with electrifying abandon. The
‘hot girls’ look on in wonder - Bernie slides up to them.
Elton gives the performance of a lifetime.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Well Crocodile rocking is something
shocking. When your feet just can’t
keep still. I never knew me a
better time and I guess I never
will. Oh Lawdy mama those Friday
nights. When Suzie wore her dresses
tight. And the Crocodile rocking
was out of sight.

Elton and the piano slowly rise off the ground. He is
suspended in the air by two feet as he plays. The audience
starts to rise up as well. Everyone joins in.

ELTON/EVERYONE
La lalalala la lalalala la lalala

The whole energy and power of the music and performance is
lifting everyone up and everything into the air. People are
suspended and enthralled at what they are witnessing and
Elton plays on unaware of the affect his show is having. He
is lost in the moment. He repeats a phrase again and again
the whole club floats up as one. He encourages them to join
in and drives the crowd to wilder and wilder appreciation.
Finally, he ends on a huge note and they all hang suspended
in time and mid air in silence. For a split second he looks
out to the stunned air born crowd. He sees Bernie who has a
huge grin on his face. The audience are elated and stunned
and all smile at him.

ELTON
Good grief!

Elton smiles back then suddenly he remembers where he is and
everyone drops back down to the ground and spontaneously
burst into a huge cheer and applause.
INT. TROUBADOUR DRESSING ROOMS - NIGHT

The insanity back stage after the gig. People crowd in to talk to Elton. Bernie bursts in on an elated and excited Elton.

BERNIE
You did it, Reg! You were brilliant!

Elton hugs Bernie and sees he’s with one of the hot girls, HEATHER. He is crestfallen as he knows what it means.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
Elton. This is Heather.

Heather grabs Bernie’s arm.

HEATHER
You were amazing. Absolutely amazing. I love your boots.

ELTON
I’m not sure they’d suit you.

Bernie looks embarrassed for a moment until Ray bursts in with Doug.

DOUG
Okay, enough bullshit! Who wants to go to a party at Mama Cass’s?

Ray holds up some keys.

RAY
This is brilliant. Doug’s just lent me his car!

EXT. L.A. ROAD - NIGHT

The guys are all in an open top car together. Ray drives with a young girl on his lap. Elton, Bernie and Heather and are all excited and love it.

I/E. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT

They pile out of the car. People mill about in the road and in the front garden.

COOL DUDE
Hey man! It’s Elton-fuckin-John.
Far out.
People give Elton a lot of attention. The cool Dude leads them into the old villa that has tepees and hammocks in the garden and an overgrown woodland feel. Guitars are played round camp fires. A bare footed and bare breasted wonderland of dope, hippies and musicians. Heather takes a joint and feeds it to Bernie as they walk in to the party. It is rock god heaven.

INT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT

Elton sits on a huge sofa between his heroes Leon Russell and Mama Cass who smokes a big joint which she passes to Elton. It’s relaxed and cool. A stoned and merry Bernie comes up and whispers in his ear.

BERNIE
Hey Elton. How cool is this?

ELTON
Yeah, great. Apparently, Dylan is here somewhere.

BERNIE
Good, good. Look, I’m going to disappear with Heather for a bit.

Elton looks over at Heather as she gets some dope from the Cool Dude.

ELTON
Really? Right...Er, okay.

BERNIE
You’ll be alright won’t you?

Elton looks around the party. It’s a cool scene that he’s not really a part of.

ELTON
Yeah, course. We still going to Tower records?

A distracted Bernie is smiling at Heather.

BERNIE
She’s talking about going to somewhere called Paradise Cove tomorrow. We’ll go another time.

Elton looks over at Heather. She smiles and waves. Heartbroken, Elton can see that Bernie is smitten.
ELTON
Of course.

BERNIE
She’s really cool. So beautiful.
America, man. Wide open spaces.
Beautiful girls. It’s a dream come
ture. Let’s stay forever.

Elton watches Bernie go to Heather as she kisses him and
leads him off. Elton watches Bernie and Heather go into the
garden.

ELTON
Blue Jean baby. LA lady. Goddess
to the band. Pretty eyes, pirate
smile.

87  EXT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT.
Heather and Bernie find a spot by the fire and she rolls a
joint for them.

ELTON
You’ll marry a music man.
Ballerina. You must have seen her
dancing in the sand.

88  INT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Elton walks through the party with a drink. People laugh and
talk but he is alone.

89  EXT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Heather dances for Bernie by the fire.

ELTON
And now she’s in me. Always with
me. Tiny Dancer in my hand.

90  INT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE. NIGHT.
Elton watches people dance, drink and make out. A bearded
weirdo spins around and shouts. People sit and watch him.
It’s a drugged out hippy scene.

ELTON
Jesus freaks. Dance, jowl by check.
Handing tickets out for God.
EXT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE – NIGHT

Someone puts a tab of acid on Bernie and Heather’s tongues and they kiss for the first time.

ELTON
Turning back. She just laughs.

I/E. MAMA CASS' HOUSE – NIGHT

Elton walks onto the balcony and looks out over L.A. lights.

ELTON
Piano man. He makes his stand. In the auditorium.

EXT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE – NIGHT

Heather takes Bernie’s hand and leads him back into the house

ELTON
Looking on. She sings his songs.
The words she knows. The tunes she hums.

EXT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE – NIGHT

Elton looks out over the city as all the guests come out on to the balcony and sing as a chorus.

CHORUS
But oh how it feels so real lying there with no one near. Only you...

INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE – NIGHT

Bernie and Heather find an empty bed room and enter.

ELTON/CHORUS
...and you can hear him. When he says softly. Slowly.

Bernie whispers to her and she laughs and kisses him. Heather smiles and suddenly leaves the room. Bernie is confused.

EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE – NIGHT

Elton looks out over L.A. Sings:
ELTON/CHORUS
Hold me closer tiny dancer. Count
the headlights on the highway.

He sees the cars lights on Sunset Blvd below.

ELTON/CHORUS (CONT'D)
Lay me down in sheets of linen. You
had a busy day today.

97 INT. MAMA CASS' BEDROOM - NIGHT
Heather returns with another girl and they undresses Bernie together and they make love. *

ELTON
Hold me closer Tiny Dancer. You had a busy day today.

98 INT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE. NIGHT.
Elton wanders in from the balcony and sits on the sofa alone.

99 INT. MAMA CASS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Elton wakes on the sofa. His head spins and he feels hung over. A smartly dressed man, JOHN REID sits in an arm chair opposite him. He is calm and relaxed and has a knowing smile. He speaks in a soft Scottish accent. He hands Elton a glass of champagne. *

REID
Dom Perignon. 63. A very good vintage.

ELTON
No thanks.

REID
It’s always important to rely on the kindness of strangers.

Elton looks blank.

REID (CONT'D)
Never mind. John Reid.

He sits next to Elton.
REID (CONT'D)
I know it’s all a bit overwhelming at first but something makes me think you’ll get used to it.

ELTON
You’re that good a judge of character are you?

REID
Of a great many things. In fact, I predict you could be the best selling artist in America if you desire.

ELTON
So you like the songs then?

REID
Not quite as much as the singer.

Reid stares at Elton. Elton stares back, amazed at this ultra-confident creature. Reid knocks back the champagne and twinkles a smile at Elton. He speaks in a low seductive tone. *

REID (CONT'D)
You don’t realise what happened at The Troubadour tonight, do you?
There are moments in a rock stars life that define who he is and how people perceive him as he ascends into the heavens. You lit the blue touch paper and now we can all see you throwing light and colour and magic into the night sky. Where there was darkness, there is now – you. Elton John. You can do anything you want. You can be anyone you want. And it’s going to be a wild ride.

Reid leans in and kisses Elton who mesmerized by this strange, dangerous and exciting creature doesn’t resist.

ELTON
Fireworks?

Reid smiles.
Naked on the bed Elton and Reid kiss. The curtain blows in the wind as the bodies in the shadows, back lit by the neon from outside the window embrace and make love.

Overhead shot of Elton in bed. Elton looks over to reveal Reid next to him. Reid’s hand rests on his side as he sleeps.

Elton gently puts his hand over Reid’s, being careful not to disturb him. ELton settles back, stares upwards, amazed, excited and enthralled that this has happened to him.

Elton, Reid, arrive at the club and there is a huge crowd around the block. Some asks Elton to sign his album. Ray rushes out to meet them.

RAY
Where the fuck have you been?

Ray ushers them in.

Elton, Reid, and Ray walk through the club.

RAY
A review from the L.A. Times has been syndicated. Things are going crazy.

They are met by Doug at the dressing room door who reads from the paper. Bernie and Heather are there too.

DOUG
“Rejoice. Rock music has a new star. He’s Elton John a 23 year old Englishman whose debut at the Troubadour was in every way magnificent.” It’s happening my friends.

Reid takes the paper and reads it.

REID
I knew it. I fucking knew it.

Bernie sees that Elton is captivated by Reid and that he looks different. Elton smiles at him.
RAY
Dick’s extended our stay. We’re in San Francisco tomorrow for three nights. After that we fly to NYC. Back here for two more shows. Then Dick wants us back in London to start the new album.

REID
This is it. You’re off.

ELTON
Will I see you when I get back?

REID
Work takes me away a lot.

ELTON
But I want to see you again.

REID
Don’t worry about me. Go, enjoy your moment. That’s what’s important.

ELTON
Come to London with me.

REID
I can’t but next time I’m there I’ll look you up. Promise.

DOUG
You’re on kid. Don’t keep your public waiting.

REID
I’m going to watch out front.

Reid goes.

DOUG
Elton!

Doug points to the stage.

ELTON
Give me a moment.

Elton looks at the crowd through the curtain and tries to take it in. Bernie joins him.
BERNIE
You okay?

ELTON
We got to work twice as hard now, Bernie.

Bernie smiles.

BERNIE
We will.

ELTON
It’s never gonna last.

BERNIE
So let’s enjoy it while we can.

Elton smiles but actually looks closer to tears.

ELTON
I’m so fucking scared.

Bernie hugs his friend. Elton composes himself. We hear the crowd go wild and cheer.

‘DON’T GO BREAKING MY HEART’ starts to play.

103A INT. DICK JAMES OFFICE - DAY

Close on a phone ringing. Mary, the secretary, grabs it.

MARY
Dick James Publishing.

Ray, hurriedly gets some papers together, obviously late.

There are boxes of Fan letters on the floor and a pile of Elton’s photos on his desk waiting to be signed. The reception looks like a bomb has gone off and it’s in complete chaos.

RAY
(To himself)
Shit, shit, shit! Where is that fucking contract.

MARY
Hold on. Ray! It’s Carl from Record Mirror.

RAY
What? Was I suppose to call him?
MARY
I don’t know. He’s asking for the release date for Elton’s new single.

RAY
Really!? I don’t know.

MARY
(into the phone)
He doesn’t know.

RAY
Don’t tell him that! Did you arrange the car to take Elton to the studio?

MARY
I didn’t know I had too.

RAY
What!?

MARY
Can Carl get an advance copy of the album?

RAY
No! Send him some tickets for the European tour or something.

MARY
Next year? He tours Canada and North America before that.

RAY
Right! Whatever! Oh balls, I’m late. Just sort it out.

Another phone starts to ring. Mary answers.

MARY
Dick James Publishing (Beat)
Ray, it’s Lorrain from the Mail...

Ray grabs his bag and runs out the door.

INT. STUDIO, ENGLAND - EVENING

Elton sings with KIKI DEE. She is full of energy and they are both having a great time with the song.
105 INT. CONTROL BOOTH - EVENING

Ray is in the control booth and Reid enters. He smiles at Elton and nods. Elton stops the recording and waves Reid in.

106 INT. STUDIO - EVENING

An excited Elton is with Reid.

ELTON
What are you doing here?

REID
Business and I promised if I was ever in town I’d look you up.

ELTON
How long are you staying?
REID
Not sure, that depends.

ELTON
I can beg if you like.

REID
For the last six months I’ve been hearing your songs everywhere. It makes it very hard to stop thinking about you.

ELTON
Really?

Ray comes in.

RAY
Come on Elton, what are you doing? Either let’s go again or go to the pub....

Reid pushes Elton into a closet.

107 INT. CLOSEST - EVENING

Reid gets up close and personal. The seduction is on.

REID
What do you want, Elton?

ELTON
Nothing.

REID
Wrong answer.

Reid kisses him.

ELTON
Dinner with you?

REID
You’re so humble it’s embarrassing. You’re a millionaire rock star who lives at home with his mum! This is grown up time now. Things are serious. Be brave. Think big. What do you really want!?

They kiss. Reid smiles and opens the door. Bernie and Heather are there now dressed in top hat and tails and an evening gown and point at a huge theatrical curtain.
Intro: ‘HONKEY CAT’

John Reid becomes Elton’s manager and leads him on a ‘dance journey’ of discovery. Introducing him to all the finer things in life. At each stage they accumulate expensive possessions.

All executed in a Hollywood 1940, 50’s Musical dance style.

They enter the ballroom, and join other dancers. Reid swings Elton into a tailors dressing room.

ELTON
When I look back, boy, I must have
been green. Bopping in the country,
fishing in a stream. Looking for an
answer, trying to find a sign
Until I saw your city lights,
honey, I was blind.

A swarm of designers gather around him with colourful bolts of cloth, sequined jackets, crazy hats. They swirl around him and he eventually emerges from the colour, transformed in his new attire, Reid looks on approvingly.

REID
They said, get back, honky cat
Better get back to the woods
Well, I quit those days and my
redneck ways. And, oh, the change
is gonna do me good.

Then they dance over to a restaurant table. Waiters make a fuss, setting the table, napkins, champagne and caviar served.

ELTON
You better get back, honky cat
Living in the city ain’t where it’s
at. It’s like trying to find gold
in a silver mine. It’s like trying
to drink whiskey from a bottle of
wine

A car horn sounds and a convertible Rolls Royce pulls up. As they jump in the back, back projection kicks in to reveal the French Riviera mountain roads. They stop at the top of a...

Staircase, as they walk / dance down the stairs, Jewelers surround them (Like Monroe in Diamonds), they drape them in watches, rings, diamond necklaces etc.
ELTON (CONT'D)
Well, I read some books, and I read some magazines. About those high-class ladies down in New Orleans. And all the folks back home, well, said I was a fool. They said, oh, believe in the Lord is the golden rule.

At the bottom of the stairs a shop window full of adverts for Large Mansion houses, Reid appears with a house brochure, shows it to Elton, Reid opens his briefcase, takes out a gold pen and cheque book, with a flourish he writes and hands it to estate agent. Elton and Reid walk off happy.

An art house worker pushes a stage flat onto the stage with a collection of Francis Bacon’s, Picasso’s and Van Gogh’s. Elton and Reid walk along making a selection.

ELTON/REID
They said, get back, honky cat
Better get back to the woods
Well, I quit those days and my redneck ways. And, oh oh oh, oh, change is gonna do me good. They said, stay at home, boy, you gotta tend the farm. Living in the city, boy, is going to break your heart.
But how can you stay when your heart says no? How can you stop when your feet say go?

The Artwork is rolled away to reveal a Caribbean beach, with young men and woman drinking cocktails and playing beachball. Reid and Elton strip down to their bathing suits and join in.

A Pair of plane steps appear they run up them and appear inside a beautifully furnished private plane with a piano and bar in the middle. They exit the plane and find them selves

In an Auction House, Furniture, sculptures are bid for, the auctioneers gavel coming down again and again and pointing to ELTON, SOLD.

They get up and walk through a big door into...

108 INT. REID'S OFFICE - DAY 108

Reid sits at his desk in his newly finished office. Gold disks on the walls etc. Dick James and Ray are there. It’s clear Elton has a hectic year or two ahead.
Elton is dressed fantastically and plays pinball and drinks whiskey from a tumbler. Dick looks at Elton.

REID
No one’s being phased out, Dick. Elton just feels that things will run more smoothly if he has personal management.

Ray looks at the Francis Bacon on the wall a little confused.

RAY
Is this upside down?

DICK
Shut up Ray! There’s never been a problem before.

REID
And there isn’t one now. There’s lots of work and commitments. Tours etc and that’s what I’ll be doing. Personal management. Taking care of things.

DICK
Will you really? You do realise I have a contract with Elton.

REID
I’ve already had that looked into. He’s quite within his rights to take on outside representation.

DICK
That’s what you think, you fucking poofta.

Dick turns on Elton.

DICK (CONT'D)
And you’re happy with this arrangement are you? After all these years.

REID
It’s not personal, Dick.

Dick sizes Elton up then walks to the door.

DICK
Come on, Ray. I own a percentage of the next two albums.

(MORE)
DICK (CONT'D)
You’ll be hearing from my lawyer
you fucking rat bag.

Dick and Ray go.

ELTON
That was horrible.

REID
Don’t worry, it’s business. Dick’s
a big boy. He’ll be fine.

A handsome young male P.A. BRYAN, comes in and delivers a bag of cocaine which Reid puts in a box on his desk. *

BRYAN
Lord Grade’s office have called
about the Royal Variety
performance. Apparently the Queen
Mother is a big fan. I’ve booked
the tickets for St. Tropez and the
return flight to London the next
morning.

REID
Put us both on that and get me the
number for the BBC.

Bryan exits.

ELTON
Couldn’t we have kept on Ray? He’s
a lovely guy.

Reid looks at Elton.

REID
‘Lovely guy’ is not a job. This is
a crucial time, Elton. You and I
are going to have to be more
careful. The papers have been
sniffing around. We can’t give them
anything to speculate on. I’m
thinking of getting someone in as
your girlfriend.

ELTON
Seems a bit excessive. *

REID
No, this is your career and our
business at stake. If our sleeping
arrangements get out then all this
is gone.
ELTON
Right.

REID
You’ll need to talk to your parents. Make sure they know what to say. Those are the first doors reporters knock on.

109 EXT. STANLEY’S HOUSE – DAY

A limo stops in a drab suburban street. Elton gets out extravagantly dressed and looks completely out of place. Kids look in amazement. He walks down the path of a down at heel house. He rings the doorbell and waits. The door opens and Stanley looks at Elton in shock for a moment.

ELTON
Hello, Dad.

STANLEY
Hello, Reg. Come in.

110 INT. STANLEY’S HOUSE – DAY

Elton sits on a small armchair and looks around whilst Stanley sits on the sofa. It is still very awkward between them. More so than ever.

ELTON
Looks like things have worked out well second time round.

STANLEY
Yes. I suppose.

ELTON
Not everybody gets a second chance.

STANLEY
No. Why are you here, reg?

ELTON
I wanted to show you how well I’m doing.

Elton takes out a Rolex box and hands it to Stanley. Stanley opens the box and looks at the watch and is dumbfounded.

ELTON (CONT’D)
My Music is really taking off.
Stanley turns the watch over in his hands and looks at it. It really is a beautiful gift. Suddenly they hear the front door open and Stanley quickly puts the watch away. A 12 year old boy similar to the young Reggie runs in and jumps onto the sofa next to his father.

GEOFF
Dad, there’s a Rolls Royce outside!

Stanley hugs Geoff whilst a second boy runs and jumps on the sofa.
STANLEY
Geoff, Stephen. This is your brother, Reggie.

STEPHEN
Half-brother.

ELTON
I’m not called Reggie anymore.

There’s an awkward silence.

ELTON (CONT'D)
I thought once I’m back off tour we could all get together. As a family.

STANLEY
Maybe.

Elton looks at Stanley and the boys - it’s clear there’s no real place or understanding for him here.

GEOFF
Are you really worth twenty-five million pound?

Elton tries his best to smile.

ELTON
I don’t know. I hope so.

STANLEY
They’re really proud of you. We’ve even got some of your records.

STEPHEN
My mums say’s you’re a poofta.

GEOFF
What’s a poofta?

STANLEY
That’s enough now boys.

Elton is too uncomfortable - he stands up.

ELTON
I’d better be off.

STANLEY
Maybe you’d like to stay for tea?
STEPHEN
I thought you said we could go to
the chippy.

ELTON
No really, I have to get goin.

STANLEY
Hang on.
Stanley leaves the room and the boys stare at Elton. No love lost here. It takes an age. Elton stands, deeply embarrassed by the whole thing. Stanley returns and hands Elton a pen and an album.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Put ‘To Arthur’ - he’s a bloke I work with. He’s quite a big fan.

Slowly Elton signs.

GEOFF
That’ll be worth a few bob now.

Elton looks at his father who is still unable to express any love for him.

STANLEY
Well, it was very nice of you to pop by, wasn’t it.

GEOFF
Let me see.

STEPHEN
He smells of lavender.

Stanley holds out his hand and shakes Elton’s.

ELTON
You still don’t know when yo hug me do you.

Stanley looks at Elton. Elton’s right- he still can’t bring himself to show Elton any physical affection.

111 EXT. STANLEY'S HOUSE - DAY 111

On the door step Stanley holds out his hand and shakes Elton’s in a friendly manner.

STANLEY
The boys loved meeting a real life pop star.

ELTON
Sure. Thanks, dad.

Stanley looks at Elton. He still can’t bring himself to show Elton any physical affection.
Close on Elton as he looks at the house. The reality harsh and raw. The boys with their faces pressed up against the windows look back at him. Stanley comes and gets them away and gives a little wave. Tears start to run down Elton’s cheeks.
INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Close on Elton as he cries. He looks up and sees the group all looking at him. He picks up the chair and throws it across the room at the wall.

ELTON
What’ve you got to do get a fucking drink around here?!

The rest of the group and the counselor stare in shock at him.

INT. WOODSIDE MANSION BEDROOM. DAY.

Elton and Reid walk out through the hallway as staff clean and make things nice.

REID
I ask you to do one thing to protect our lives and you can’t even do that!

ELTON
You really pick your moments, don’t you? I’ve got a show. Can we do this another time.

REID
You’re not the first closeted queer with a mummy complex.

I/E. WOODSIDE MANSION STAIRS. DAY.

REID
You’ve got to grow up. You’re getting worse. Do you want me to tell her?

ELTON
Why would I want that?

REID
Because I do everything.

ELTON
No. She’ll make it about herself and be all distressed and dramatic. It’ll be horrible.
REID
Would you rather some sleazy reporter talk to her and have her blab the wrong thing? The next day you’ll be reading a headline saying ‘Elton John – Queer.’ Is that what you want? She needs to be clear on what to say. I’ve arranged for her to come over Sunday, talk to her then.

ELTON
What? You didn’t think to ask me first? Do you care how much pressure I’m under?

REID
Not really.

They exit the house and there are few expensive cars on the driveway. They get into a limo.

116     INT. LIMO – DAY

Elton and Reid are in the back of a limo. Elton drinks whiskey as Reid fumes.

REID
For fucks sake, stop sulking. It has to be done wether you like it or not! Are you going to be scared of her your whole life?

ELTON
Right! Stop the car!!

REID
Honestly, you’re pathetic.

The car stops.

REID (CONT'D)
You’re on stage in 15 minutes!

Elton gets out.

ELTON
You’re the big shot manager. You make my excuses! Tell them I’m indisposed – breaking my mothers heart.
117 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Reid shouts from the window of the car as Elton legs it down the street.

REID
Elton! Elton!

118 INT. REGGIE’S HOUSE - DAY

Sheila and Fred settle down to watch the telly. ‘Liberace at the Royal Albert Hall’. The phone rings. Sheila picks up.

SHEILA
Pinner 9755.

ELTON (O.S.)
Mum. It’s me.

SHEILA
I know who you are!

119 INT. PHONE BOX - DAY

Elton is half drunk, the bottle of whiskey in his hand.

ELTON
I have something to tell you.

SHEILA
Reggie, we’re going to miss the bit of the show with you on.

ELTON
Look, shut up, Mum! I’m not on telly yet. I’m talking to you.

SHEILA (O.S.)
But it’s already started and it’s live....It’s live! *

ELTON
I’ve got something important to say. For Christ sake. Tell Fred to turn the TV down. Mum. Me and John we’re...The thing is...I’m homosexual. A poofa. A fairy. A queen.

Silence.
ELTON (CONT'D)
Say something.

SHEILA
For godsake, I know that. I’ve known for years.

ELTON
No you haven’t!

SHEILA
Of course I have. You’re my child.

ELTON
Right. And you don’t mind?

SHEILA
Frankly, I don’t care. I’d rather you keep that sort of thing to yourself. I just hope you realise you’re choosing a life of being alone forever. You’ll never be loved properly.

Elton hangs up as Reid opens the door of the phone box.

ELTON
She said I’ll never be loved.

Reid grabs Elton and gets in his face.

REID
Don’t you ever put me in that fucking position again. You arse-hole. You’re on in 5 minutes so get over yourself and do the fucking show. We’re running a business, you fat shit!

Elton pushes him away.

REID (CONT'D)
Don’t you push me.

Reid slaps him in the face then storms off.

120 INT. ROYAL ALBERT HALL, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Elton looks in the mirror at his bruised cheek. He applies some make up to cover it. He puts on an outrageous pair of glasses, then changes them for a more outrageous pair. Then he his hair - his comb is full of hairs.
He looks carefully where he is going bald. He sniffs a line of coke off a mirror and then puts on a outrageous head-dress hat to cover his receding hairline.

121 INT. ROYAL ALBERT HALL, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT 121 *

Elton come out of the dressing room. Bernie looks at him obviously unimpressed by the outlandish of his costume.

BERNIE
You ok?

Elton walks off down the corridor as Bernie rushes to keep up.

ELTON
I’ve got the number one album in America, again! I’m about to embark on the highest grossing tour in rock history. I'm personally responsible for 5% of all record sales on the entire planet and I have the highest platform heels known to man. Of course I’m OK.

BERNIE
It used to be only the two of us. Now there is bus loads of people just to do the music. Don’t you ever want to go out and sing without all this paraphernalia? You know, be yourself?

As they come round the corner they both see Reid talking intimately with a young man.

ELTON
Why the fuck would I want to do that? If you were a real friend you wouldn’t say that shit. People don’t pay to see Reg Dwight. They pay to see Elton John! Don’t ever tell me how to do my job.

Reid looks at Elton. The young man laughs out of embarrassment.

BERNIE
You don’t have to put up with this, you know, Reg.
ELTON
Write the fucking lyrics, Bernie.
Let me deal with the rest.

Elton takes a shot of Jack Daniels from a bottle behind the stage then turn to Bernie.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Sorry.

BERNIE
I know.

Elton walks out on stage.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Elton starts a wild piano with the PINBALL WIZARD riff. He screams wildly into the camera.

ELTON
Ever since I was a young boy. I’ve played the silver ball. From Soho down to Brighton. I must have played them all. But I ain’t seen nothing like him. In any amusement hall. That deaf dumb and blind kid. Sure plays a mean pinball!

We enter Elton ‘Pinball world’. A giant pinball machine of tours and making huge amounts of money. Reid plays Elton as the ball and Elton is blindly bounced and buffered from one concert to another. From another country to another spending spree. People rush and pull him. Elton is under the glass of the machine and keeps moving and being played. He goes down different holes and pops out at a new gig. Reid sings too as he plays, laughs and grins away.

REID
He stands like a statue. Becomes part of the machine. Feeling all the bumpers. Always playing clean. He plays by intuition. The deaf dumb and blind kid. Sure plays a mean pinball!

* GIRLS AND BOYS
How do you he does it? I don’t know! What makes him so good?
The game gets faster and faster and more manic, Elton spins round faster and faster until Reid gives it one shove too many and Elton goes down the black hole marked L.A. We pan up and see the machines TILT light flash.

INT. CORRIDOR, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A - DAY

Elton walks out of his room into the bright sunlight - an amazing looking transvestite maid cleans.

ELTON
Where am I?

MAID
At your house, Mr John. In L.A.

EXT. POOL AREA, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Elton walks out to the pool side. The ‘maid’ gives him an orange juice.

ELTON
Put a couple of shots of vodka in there.

He sees Reid, slightly obscured by a pool side table.

REID
Morning.

Elton sees a young man emerge and realises that Reid has had a BJ from him.

ELTON
You’re up early.

REID
Just a bit of ‘rock and roll’.

ELTON
Rock and roll is not screwing the cleaning staff.

REID
Rock and roll is getting you out of bed in the morning. Arranging 250 gigs a year and overseeing PRS audits in 176 different countries. It’s employment contracts for 112 people in full or part-time employment.

(MORE)
REID (CONT'D)
It’s insurance, copyright indemnity, renegotiating your previously insane contracts and wiping your arse. All you do is play the piano but in my case, Elton, rock and roll is a 87 million dollar a year industry and you begrudge me a little bit on the side. You really are a selfish prick.

ELTON
Get out.

REID
You’re so predictable.

ELTON
This is my house. Get out of here. I want to be by myself. Not with people who don’t give a shit about me and take the fucking piss.

Reid laughs at Elton. A voice calls out.

SHEILA (O.S.)
Yohoo. Elton.

Elton turns and sees Sheila, Fred, Ivy and a bunch of Brits who have just arrived. They are not dressed for the sun and all have suitcases and bags with them.

ELTON
What the fuck is all this?

REID
You told me to hire a plane and fly your family over for the gig.

ELTON
I did?

Sheila joins with some other people.

SHEILA
You remember the Anderson’s from next door, don’t you?

Elton looks to see a middle aged couple he has no recollection of. ‘The maid’ comes and takes their bags and their eyes nearly pop out of their heads.
MR. ANDERSON
Your lovely Mum’s been telling us all about the house you’ve bought her in Barnes.

MRS. ANDERSON
And what a shy little boy you were. Look at you now. Such a lovely big house.

Ivy comes joins.

IVY
I can’t believe I’m actually in America. I’ve never been on a plane before.

She hugs him.

ELTON
How was it?

IVY
I didn’t like the going up and coming down bits but the rest of it was nice.

She looks around at all the people laughing and invading his home and then takes Elton in. Ivy can see Elton is not at his best.

IVY (CONT’D)
Are we still going on that little trip you promised?

Elton looks puzzled at Reid who nods.

REID
Of course you are Ivy. It’s all arranged.

SHEILA
Come on Elton, you can show us around.

Sheila takes Elton by the arm and leads him away with the Anderson's.

EXT. LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

The bright lights of the city. We hear the closing music of Elvis’ show.
INT. ELVIS’ DRESSING ROOM, LAS VEGAS CASINO – NIGHT

The door opens and SONNY is there with Elton and Ivy.

SONNY

As he opens the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)
(To Elton)
Make it quick.

Members of the Memphis Mafia hang about and drink. ELVIS is sat in a throne at his dressing table in his very ornate and over blown dressing room. He is fat and sweaty. His breathing is labored. He is doped up to the eye balls and not all there. Streaks of black hair dye run down the side of his face which an obsequious hair dresser tries in vain to fix. No one takes any notice of Elton and Ivy. Close on Elton as he sees the sorry state his boyhood hero is in.

ELVIS
How did I sound tonight boys?

SONNY
Great boss. Really strong.

ELVIS
And the back?

MEMPHIS MAFIA
Good at the back. People were crying.

ELVIS
Hey Joe, find me another nice girl tonight. That one last night man, I tell ya! Best damned head I’d ever had.

All the mafia boys laugh and agree with Elvis. Ivy steps forward.

IVY
Elvis. It’s lovely to meet you. My grandson, Elton and I are big fans.

ELVIS
That’s real nice. Thank you ma’am. I heard of your son. Everybody has.

The mafia all nod but there’s an awkward silence.
I was hoping you’d sing Heartbreak Hotel tonight. It was my first record.

Another English boy come over to conquer the states and steal our money and women huh? That’s real nice. What’s your record called?

‘Candle in the wind’.

No, I think it was another one. I don’t remember.

You were a huge inspiration to me.

‘Were’?

Elton doesn’t know what to say and Elvis sees it in his eyes. Elvis takes a cheap nylon scarf from around his neck, dabs his forehead then gives it to Ivy.

Here you go ma’am. Glad you all enjoyed the show.

One of the Memphis Mafia starts to take off Elvis’ boots as he can’t reach them himself.

Okay let’s get you out of here. The King is tired.

Elton takes a last look at his hero before he exits. The crowd can be heard still screaming ‘Elvis, Elvis’.

A shell shocked Elton and Ivy follow Sonny.

Mark my words. Dead in six months.

Close on Elton ‘FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND’.
INT. ELTON’S HOUSE L.A. - DAY

Bernie arrives in his cowboy gear with a couple of blonde girls in tow. The front door is open and they go inside. Old friends, and neighbors from Pinner cavort with record company people and enjoy the thrill of being in a rock star’s home. Bernie looks into the library and sees Reid snog a young man. He then catches a glimpse of two or three men as they embrace. A GUY chatting up a GIRL stops Bernie.

BAND MEMBER
Hey Bernie, tell her how many people we’re playing to at Dodger’s tomorrow?

ELTON
Er, 50-60,000.

BAND MEMBER
See? Over two nights, that’s more than a hundred thousand people.

GIRL
Yeah, I can do math you know.

Bernie wanders off with the girls.

INT. BEDROOM, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Elton sits alone in the darkened room. Elton vaguely mumbles to himself and lines up a row of pills on the coffee table. There’s a gentle knock and Bernie and the girls stick their heads in.

BERNIE
Elt. You okay? You’re missing the all fun.

ELTON
Well as long as the fun isn’t missing me then who gives a shit?

Bernie turns to the girls.

BERNIE
We’ll chat to him later.

Bernie closes the door.
129 EXT. PARTY, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Around the pool Sheila, Ivy and Fred are all in their swimming costumes and have the time of their lives.

130 INT. BEDROOM, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Elton necks a pile of pills and slurps Jack Daniels. He stands up but the room sways violently and staggers into the corridor.

131 INT. CORRIDOR, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Elton steadies himself and wanders through the party being the perfect host but in reality he falls into things. He knocks down a vase of flowers and falls over. The guests watch impassive.

132 EXT. POOL AREA, ELTON’S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

Outside everyone has a great time at the party. There is a crash as Elton throws open the doors. Everybody looks.
White Shooting

Elton walks along the side of the pool and climbs on to the diving board and holds out his arms. People laugh and clap.

ELTON
And for my next trick - I am going to drown myself.

He falls face first into the pool and hits the water with a massive splash.

INT. POOL, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A - DAY

Elton sinks slowly to the bottom. The pool is unfeasibly deep. As he sinks, pills float out of his mouth like bubbles. He goes further and further to the bottom as the intro to Rocketman plays. Elton reaches the bottom of the pool and is curious to find a tiny figure dressed in an astronauts spacesuit who plays the introduction on a tiny toy piano. The tiny figure is Young Reggie.

REGGIE
She packed my bags last night pre-flight. Zero hour nine a.m.

The song is muffled by the space helmet. But now we are inside the space helmet with Reggie and singing is fine.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
And I'm gonna be high as a kite by then.

Elton thrashes around, desperately and tries to get away from Reggie, who looks up sadly. People dive in above Elton and swim down to him.

ELTON
I miss the earth so much. I miss my life. It's lonely out in space.

Elton is hauled upwards by people.

ELTON (CONT'D)
On such a timeless flight.

He is hauled out of the pool. Everybody looks at him.

ELTON (CONT'D)
And I think it's gonna be a long, long time. Till touch down brings me round again to find.
He is rushed through the crowds on a trolley - Bernie mops his brow, Reid pushes people out of the way - to an ambulance.

ELTON (CONT'D)
I’m not the man I think I am at all. Oh no no no, I’m a rocketman. Rocketman burning out his fuse up here alone -

INT. AMBULANCE, L.A. - DAY

Elton in the ambulance wired to machinery. Elton looks at the Paramedic.

ELTON
And all this science I don’t understand. It’s just my job five days a week. A rocket man, a rocket man.

EXT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - DAY

Elton’s ambulance pulls up. Paramedics run to the vehicle and open the doors. As they spring open and Elton climbs out being helped by the paramedics.

EXT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

What appeared to be the entrance to the hospital turns out to be the entrance to backstage. Reid and his acolytes swarm round Elton and start to put him back together. A line of coke as they put on his stage costume. A shot of whiskey as they put on his hat and glasses. Elton straightens up and is now dressed in his Dodger’s Stadium attire with his bat.

ELTON
And I think it’s gonna be a long, long time. Till touch down brings me round again to find.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM STAGE, L.A. - NIGHT

Elton runs backstage but sings on. He runs on stage. The crowd goes wild. As he comes on someone from the crowd throws a ball. Elton swings his bat and hits it way into the crowd.

ELTON
I’m not the man I think I am at all. Oh no no no, I’m a Rocket man.

(MORE)
White Shooting 82.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Rocket man burning out his fuse up here alone -

Elton stares out at the vast crowd, the whole stadium is lit by lighters. The camera pans up, it is impossible to know where the lighters stop and the stars of the night sky start. We pan up to the stars in the night sky. A jet flies across the sky. Elton looks up at the plane and suddenly shoots up into the air like a rocket.

138 INT. STARSHIP ONE - NIGHT

Elton lands in a seat on the plane and Bernie sits opposite him. Reid, and all the cronies are either crashed out or drunk at the bar.

BERNIE
Elton? Elton!

ELTON
What were you saying?

Elton looks a bit unsure where he is.

BERNIE
I need a break.

ELTON
You need a break? What about me?!

BERNIE
Creatively speaking. I need to sort myself out.

ELTON
Jesus Bernie, for a straight man you can be really gay sometimes.

BERNIE
I’ve got nothing to say anymore. Every time I wake up all I see is clouds. One tour after another. I don’t know who I am half the time. I’m going home for a while.

ELTON
That’s nice for you

BERNIE
You’re stronger than me. I’m not the writer I was.
ELTON
Is this the same speech you make
when you want another divorce?

BERNIE
When did you get so cynical, Elton.
It’s doesn’t suit you.

A beat while Elton looks at Bernie.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
Why don’t we both just disappear
for a bit together. Recharge. We
can go to my ranch and hide away.
Write like the old days. You in one
room, me in another. There’s plenty
of space...

ELTON
No. There’s other writers I want to
work with. It’ll do me good to
collaborate with new people. We
should take a break.

Bernie gets up and walks back to the bar. Elton watches him
and all the others drink and party. A dark mood is over him.

138A INT. SIDE STAGE, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT  138A *
Elton waits to go on. A MINION fusses with his huge wig. *

ELTON
I can’t fucking move. What’s the *
point of the wig if I can’t fucking *
move. *

MINION
You have to let the glue dry. *

ELTON
Well get it to hurry up. Where’s my *
sushi? *

SUSHI GIRL
Here. *

ELTON
This is yellowtail. *

SUSHI GIRL
Yes, we flew it in from Osaka. *
ELTON
I hate fucking yellowtail.

He throws the sushi.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Everybody knows I hate yellowtail.

MINION
Please stop moving.

ELTON
How am I expected to play in front
of 5000 people on nothing but
yellowtail! Fuck this. Give me a
bottle of whiskey for god’s sake.

INT. THE STAGE, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT

Elton staggers onto the stage. The crowd start to applaud. He
makes it to the piano and sits. He laughs to himself.

ELTON
My loyal subjects!

Elton laughs again.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Hello. Hello, Australia. Or New
York. Or Swindon. Or where-ever-the-
hell-we-are.

Silence. Someone coughs.

ELTON (CONT'D)
The problem with you lot, the
problem with you lot is you think
“Oh here comes Elton he’ll cheer us
up. He’ll sing us a song”. But you
know what? It’s not that easy. Have
you thought about what’s going on?
(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
Have you asked yourself what you’re doing here, listening to me all happy clappy. There are people starving in Africa. There are people dying, people without homes and here we are singing bloody songs about it.

He takes a drink of water and tries to pull himself together.

ELTON (CONT'D)
But anyway, I blame the Arabs and the Jews and the Christians and the Hindus and some of those Buddhists aren’t so great either.

Elton laughs at himself. The rest of the band can’t hide their embarrassment.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Anyway, this ones for all the atheists out there.

As the music kicks in. “BENNY AND THE JETS”.

140 INT. STARSHIP ONE - NIGHT
Elton’s usual after show party full of debauched hedonistic party people. Drag queen’s, Muscle men/women, hangers on, groupies of both sex, roadies and all the weird and wonderful going strong. They cheer as Elton enters. The guests are all dressed in Elton’s stage outfits from over the years.

DRAG QUEEN
Hey kids, shake it loose together.
The spotlight’s hitting something.
That’s been known to change the weather. We’ll kill the fatted calf tonight.

The camera pulls out as someone drapes a huge mink coat over Elton’s naked shoulders.

141 INT. PARTY WONDERLAND, UNDERGROUND CLUB NYC 80’S - NIGHT
Elton and all the people from the party dance in as Elton sings.

The party Elton’s always wanted, where anything goes and all the bold and the beautiful are there doing their debauched best. Elton goes from room to room.
He wanders into a large hall/ party area where it all happens.

ELTON
So stick around. You’re gonna hear electric music. Solid walls of sound. Say, Candy and Ronnie, have you seen them yet. Uh but they’re so spaced out.

A high and drunk Elton kisses anyone who is near. He also hands out watches and gifts to everyone who smiles at him.

Next to Elton – a huge naked man wearing a chief’s head dress appears next to him.

Now everyone dances in synchronization. Hands wander all over naked bodies.

Elton smiles to the camera and gets on his knees, turns to the guy – Elton finds he is perfectly positioned, at crotch height. The crowd close in. The crowd part to reveal Elton singing straight to camera.

Elton sits at a grand piano and plays. As he sings he is in a golden halo – Elton singing delightedly into the camera. The crowd close in on Elton singing like a door closing.

Elton appears with someone on his knees in front of him – a blonde young man. The young man stands, wipes his lips and Elton hands him a watch and strolls towards the bed.

A young muscle man spreads himself out and rolls around. He then takes Elton by the hand and they climb into bed together.

ELTON (CONT'D)
B-B-B-Benie and the Jets. Oh but they’re weird and they’re wonderful. Oh Benie she’s really keen. She’s got electric boots a mohair suit. You know I read it in a magazine. B-B-B-Bennie and the Jets.

There is a succession of men that Elton rolls in and out of bed with. He pulls the sheets over their heads and then a new man is in there with him. He rolls over and there is a different man in there. He kisses one guy and then there is a new man in there. It gets faster and faster and more bodies roll around.
INT. HOTEL ROOM, U.S.A - DAY

Elton sits up abruptly in bed. The curtains are all closed keeping out most of the daylight. It is the full rock star paranoid hide away.

ELTON
Fucking hell!

He picks up the phone.

ELTON (CONT'D)
This is the Presidential Suite.
There’s a noise outside my window.
I know it’s the fucking wind. Do something about it!

He slams the phone down. A young man is in bed with him.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Remind me.

HUGH
Hugh.

ELTON
Right, Hugh.

HUGH
Why do you play these games Elton?
You know who I am.

ELTON
Let’s have a line.

HUGH
Wouldn’t you rather get some breakfast? It’s seven in the morning.

ELTON
I didn’t ask you the fucking time!

Hugh slowly gathers his clothes.

HUGH
You’re a good person, Elton. It’s a shame you don’t think so too. You live in this bullshit world where you pretend not to notice or care. It’s been, what, three months now and I don’t know who I am anymore. God knows what it’s like for you. I’m seriously getting scared.
ELTON
What the hell are you scared of?

HUGH
Dying. We’ve had a wild time but I
can’t be part of this. The drink
and drugs are more important to you
than people. You should look after
yourself.

ELTON
It’s a bit late for that.

Elton takes an expensive watch and offers it to Hugh.

ELTON (CONT'D)
Have something for your trouble.

HUGH
Fuck you.

Hugh doesn’t take the watch and leaves.

143 INT. STUDIO, CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

A paranoid and depressed Elton sits with RENATE the studio
engineer at the mixing desk. There is also TWO GAY GUYS just
hanging out.

RENAE
Would you like a cup of tea?

Elton looks at Renate and she smiles.

ELTON
Got anything stronger?

RENAE
Would you like to hear it again?

Elton mumbles to himself.

ELTON
Not really.
RENATE
You should be very proud. I’ve watched you play many times. Your music is always so personal, honest and open. It must be hard sometimes.

144 INT. STUDIO, GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Elton holds a cup of tea. It is warm in his hands but he looks at it like it’s the strangest thing he’s ever seen. The steam rises from the cup as Elton, Renate and the two gay guys watch a news report about Ryan White on the television. It shows how he has AIDS from a blood transfusion and how he is being vilified and persecuted at school through fear and ignorance. He is a thoughtful and decent young man as is his mother who is in the news report too. Renate watches too.

RENATE
They say it’s an epidemic in New York now. I have a friend who said they call it ‘gay cancer’ at the hospital. He’s wasting away too. He has sores in his mouth and can hardly eat anymore. It’s so distressing for his family.

GAY GUY 1
My mother believes you can catch it from a toilet seat. She won’t let me use the bathroom and I caught her throwing away a cup I drank from.

Elton looks at Guy 1 and notices that he is self conscious about a mark on his cheek.

GAY GUY 2
Thugs ran through the gay district in Chicago and beat people with baseball bats.

145 INT. ELTON’S HOUSE L.A. - MORNING

Elton in nothing more than a robe sits on the floor. The television is on. There is a huge pile of records spread out which he frantically goes through and alphabetizes. He stops and in frustration bends and twists up and breaks a vinyl record.

ELTON
Fuck!!!
Reid is let in by the trans maid.

ELTON (CONT'D)
What do you want? I’m busy.
White Shooting

REID
Why don’t you get back in the studio you’re paying for?

Elton gets a copy of the Rolling Stone Magazine and starts manically going through it and waving it at Reid.

ELTON
What’s all this about only getting to number eleven in Italy? What have you been doing?

REID
The song doesn’t work. It’s number one in Finland but who gives a fuck about that. The record is coked out, MOR, shit.

ELTON
You never understood me or what I go through. I should have sacked you when you left me.

REID
You used to be a genius – now you’re just a fat fuck who plays the piano. I’m glad I left you. It means I can maintain some objectivity on your self-indulgent, myopic little world. Go in the studio and make some music, or don’t. I don’t care.

ELTON
You will do when the money runs out.

REID
You signed contracts with me long ago. Every bit of tuna you stuff down your bloated fucking throat, every limousine you ferry your entourage around in comes out of your end. I’ll still be collecting my 20% long after you’ve killed yourself.

Reid exits and Elton throws the ashtray at the door.
146 INT. PRIVATE DOCTORS - DAY

Elton in large dark sunglasses looks sheepish and paranoid as the CLINIC NURSE takes his blood. She puts a label on his sample marked ‘Mr Smith’.

CLINIC NURSE
The results take 6 to 8 weeks.
We’ll be in touch when we know.

147 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL. DAY.

The group all stare at Elton. His fingers are intertwined and crushed.

PATIENT
So? What were the results?

ELTON
I got lucky. I don’t know how. I shouldn’t be. I’ve known so many people who didn’t make it.

COUNSELOR
And how does that make you feel?

ELTON
Numb? I think I’ve gone so far from the shore that there’s no turning back.

COUNSELOR
There’s always another chance. We all make mistakes. You have to allow for that.

Elton starts to laugh to himself.

148 INT. STUDIO. NIGHT.

A slumped and lost Elton sits at the piano pressing one key. Renate is in the control room. Elton look through the glass at her and a strange glow is all around her. Renate smiles at him.

Elton sings a Capella: ‘DON’T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME’.

ELTON
I can’t light no more of my darkness. All my pictures seem to fade to black and white.

(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
I’m growing tired and time stands still before me. Frozen here on the ladder of my life.

RENEATE
Too late to save yourself from falling. To take a chance and change your way of life.

ELTON/RENEATE
But you misread my meaning when I met you. Closed the door and left me blinded by the light.

The music plays on as a gospel choir take up the song.

149 EXT. WOODSIDE MANSION - DAY.

Elton and Renate stand under a flower covered alter in the gardens and kiss. There are screams and shouts and camera flashes. Elton smiles as the gospel choir sing behind them.

GOSPEL CHOIR
Don’t let the sun go down on me.
Although I searched myself, it’s always someone else I see. I’d just allow a fragment of your life to wander free. But losing everything is like the sun going down on me.

Reid, Sheila, Fred and Ivy are there but no one is as confused and troubled as Bernie.

150 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton has tears running down his face.

ELTON
I’ve never said it before but Renate didn’t deserve that. She’s a good person. I dragged her into all that madness.

PATIENT
I remember when you got married. The papers were full of it.
COUNSELOR
Did being married make you happy?

ELTON
Not really. I’m gay.

EXT. WOODSIDE MANSION - MORNING

Birds sing and the sun shines as one gardener waters the lawn and another rakes leaves.

INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

The song ends as Elton exits from one room and Renate exits from another.

ELTON/RENADE
Morning.

INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, KITCHEN - MORNING

Elton sits at the table and pours himself a vodka and orange as Renate makes herself a coffee. She sits opposite him. The clock ticks. Elton sighs.

ELTON
Sorry.

RENADE
I know.

INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT

A pissed Elton comes into the restaurant. The Maitre de welcomes him and Elton whispers something then makes his way to a table. It’s like the King has arrived - people rubber neck as diners greet him and shake his hand. The whole thing is a complete palaver but Elton keeps a beaming smile on his face then sits at the table with Sheila and Fred. Faced by his mother he is weak and child like.

SHEILA
That poor Renate. Such a lovely woman, divorce can be so painful.
You’re looking well!

ELTON
I suppose, yes.
SHEILA
Anyway darling, celebration is on order, we’ve found a lovely villa by the sea, it’d be good if you would talk to John today to get the money arranged. Can’t risk losing it.

FRED
It’s in minorca. We love it there.
ELTON
Minorca?! What do you want to go to
 go there for?

SHEILA
Because you’re driving me away.

ELTON
One little slip about the Jews and
everyone gets hysterical.

SHEILA
It wasn’t just them. You’ve
 insulted everybody and I’m the one
 who has to hear about it.

FRED
Every time we pick up a paper
there’s something in it about the
drink and drugs. You’re breaking
your mother’s heart.

ELTON
I’ll write her a cheque, she can
 buy a new one!

SHEILA
How dare you Reggie!

ELTON
I’m not fucking, Reggie! I am Elton
Hercules John. Who in their right
mind calls their son Reginald
Dwight!?

SHEILA
How could you say something like
 that to me when I’ve given up so
 much for you!?

ELTON
What? What have you given up for
 me?

SHEILA
How about your father for a start!

ELTON
You heartless monster! I don’t live
life in black and white. I don’t
want your fucked up frigid ideas
about anything. I’m sick of running
away from who I am. There’s nothing
wrong with success or pleasure.

(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
Why am I apologizing for it? So I
fucked everything that moves and
took every drug known to man. I
enjoyed every last minute of it.

SHEILA
You’ve never had to work hard for a
bloody thing in your life. Ever
since you first dangled your legs
in front of a piano you’ve been
lucky. It all just comes to you and
we’re the ones who to suffer. I
should never of had children. Do
you know how disappointing it is to
be your mother?
ELTON
What have I got to do to make you
love me? What have I got to do to
make you care? What do I do when
lightning strikes me? And I wake to
find that you're not there?

Elton gets up from the table and walks through the restaurant
to the toilets.

155 INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, TOILETS - NIGHT
Elton enters and splashes water on his face and sings into
the mirror.

ELTON
What have I got to do to make you
want me? What have I got to do to
be heard? What do I say when it's
all over? And sorry seems to be the
hardest word.

156 INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT
Elton comes out of the toilets and walks back to his table.
As he does the restaurant punters sing although they don't
look at Elton.

PUNTERS
It's sad, so sad (so sad)
It's a sad, sad situation
And it's getting more and more
absurd. It's sad, so sad (so sad)
Why can't they talk it over?

ELTON
Oh it seems to me. That sorry seems
to be the hardest word.

Elton sits down. He turns to a waiter:
ELTON (CONT'D)
Bring two chocolate puddings, a raspberry fool and an apple pie.

WAITER
What kind of ice cream would you like?

ELTON
All of them.

Elton looks up and Bernie sits opposite him.

BERNIE
Where’s Reid nowadays?

ELTON
Does it matter? He hates my guts.

BERNIE
Nobody hates you, Elton.

Elton pours himself a big drink and downs it.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
Nobody except you.

ELTON
What are you doing here, Bernie!? You fucked off when it suited. Now you come crawling back to lecture me. From the first moment we got somewhere, you decided to leave me and go fuck some tart. Some trollop was more important to you than me and all those legends who where welcoming us in. You left me at the most important time! I went to tower records on my own, Bernie because if I’d have waited for you, it would have been too late!

The waiter brings the desserts and ice cream and Elton eats.

BERNIE
When did you give up, Reg? When did you stop being in control? If you don’t care about yourself how do you expect anyone else too?

ELTON
Whenever I’ve needed you most you weren’t there. I worked my balls off to get us out of the shit.

(MORE)
White Shooting

ELTON (CONT'D)
Day in, day out, for years. And now
I’m the one who can’t walk the
streets! I’m the one who doesn’t
have a life. I don’t get to sit
around and chew on a fucking pencil
with my feet up on a desk.

BERNIE
“Write the lyrics Bernie and I’ll
take care of everything else”.

ELTON
It was a test you selfish prick!
You should have known that!

Elton eats and drinks more. Bernie stares at his old friend
heartbroken. Elton eats and drinks more.

Cue:Intro to ‘GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD’.

BERNIE
When are you gonna come down. When
are you going to land. I should
have stayed on the farm. I should
have listened to my old man.

Bernie gets up and walks out of the restaurant. Elton starts
to follow him.

ELTON
Where the fuck are you going?

157
EXT. PICCADILLY, LONDON - NIGHT
Bernie walks down the middle of the road. Elton follows him
out.

BERNIE
You know you can’t hold me forever.
I didn’t sign up with you. I’m not
a present for your friends to open.
This boy’s too young to be singing
the blues.

Bernie hails a taxi and gets in.

158
INT. TAXI, LONDON - NIGHT
Bernie sings in the back of the taxi.
BERNIE
So goodbye yellow brick road. Where
the dogs of society howl. You can’t
plant me in your penthouse. I’m
going back to my plough. Back to
the howling old owl in the woods.
Hunting the horny back toad. Oh
I’ve finally decided my future
lies. Beyond the yellow brick road.

159 EXT. STREET, LONDON - NIGHT
Elton stands in the street and watches Bernie go.

ELTON
Coward. The same as always. Leaving
me when things get too real.

160 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, KITCHEN - NIGHT
Elton enters and collapses. He crawls to the bottom of the
stairs, curls up into a ball and cries.

ELTON
You idiot, you idiot, you fucking
idiot. What the fuck are you doing?

Staff walk past but think it’s best to leave him where he is.

161 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, BATHROOM - NIGHT
Elton runs in and pukes in the toilet.

162 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT
Elton slams the door. He takes the briefcase and hurries to
his desk. He hastily cuts an enormous line and snorts it.

ELTON
I’ll show them. I’ll get well. I’ll
get clean and fucking show him.
Bernie betrays me, everyone does.
No one wants you when you lose. Ha!
Fuck them. I’ll get so clean
they’ll fucking shit...

He starts to shake. He staggers up from the desk. Shakes. He
is having a fit.
ELTON (CONT'D)
Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

He staggers to the top of the stairs.

163 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, STAIRCASE – NIGHT

Elton passes out and slides face first down the staircase. He comes to a stop at the bottom and can not move. Dribble and sputum run from his mouth and nose. His eyes roll back in his head.

164 INT. LIMO – NIGHT

Reid talks on the phone.

REID
I’m on my way to see him now. It’s a chest infection, Mac. He’s going to be fine. How are ticket sales? Great. Add five more nights. Let me worry about that. I always get him up and running. He’ll be there.

165 INT. ELTON’S PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT

A nurse attends to Elton who is in bed looking grey wired up to lots of machines. Elton’s eyes flicker open.

NURSE
How are you feeling?

ELTON
The heart attack after the cocaine seizure was a bit of a shock but otherwise fine.

NURSE
There are places you can go, you know, where they can help you with addiction.

ELTON
I don’t need any help.

Reid opens the door and the nurse goes and keeps him from entering.

NURSE
He’s not awake yet I’m afraid.
REID
When can he get out?

NURSE
You’ll have to talk to Dr. Vaughn about that.

REID
Right. Make sure he isn’t disturbed. He’s not allowed any visitors.

NURSE
He hasn’t had any. No one’s been in to see him.

REID
Right. Good.

Reid goes and the nurse turns off the lights and leaves too.
The sound of “ELTON, ELTON, ELTON” fades up.

165A INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION – DAY  165A *

Elton is at the counter while a NURSE gets together his prescriptions. As she talks him through what-does-what his attention is drawn by the TV. There is the Ted Coppal interview with Ryan white on.

NURSE (O.S.)
These are for your blood pressure.
You’ll need to take 3 a day. These are Oxycodone, you need to be careful with these, it’s a pain reliever but they are very strong.
Now, for the anxiety and tremors I’m going to give you Valium and Diazepam, please keep to the prescribed dose as they can cause a dependency. I’ve also booked you in with Dr. Vaughn next week to assess your irregular heartbeat.

As Elton watches the TV in horror. Hugh walks up.

HUGH
Wow! That was quick! How you feeling?

ELTON
The heart attack after the cocaine seizure was a bit of a shock.
Hugh smiles and shakes his head.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here Hugh?

HUGH  
It’s normal to come and see friends  
when they go into hospital.

ELTON  
Well, you’ve seen me. I’m all  
better.

HUGH  
Really? Cause you look like shit!

The TV coverage of Ryan White plays on and Elton Looks at it.  
Elton and Hugh Sit.

ELTON  
This kid breaks my heart.

HUGH  
He’s not going down without a  
fight.

ELTON  
Why doesn’t he scream and shout  
about the shitty hand he’s been  
dealt?

HUGH  
What difference would it make? He  
obviously thinks there’s something  
better he can do with the time he’s  
got left.

ELTON  
What are you saying?

HUGH  
Nothing. Just an observation.

ELTON  
When did you get so fucking  
philosophical?

HUGH  
I’m in Rehab. It puts a different  
perspective on things. You should  
try it.

ELTON  
What?
HUGH
You heard. It’s time to stop the self pity and get on with it.

ELTON
I don’t need that kind of help.

HUGH
Yes you do. You’re an alcoholic, cocaine addict with sex issues. Where are you going now?

ELTON
I have shows in NYC. Rehab will have to wait because my fans won’t.

HUGH
They’ll still buy your records if you take two weeks off.

ELTON
You’ve no fucking idea what you’re talking about. Stick to being a dancer or whatever it is you do.

Elton takes his big bag of prescription pills and goes.
INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Elton sits at his dressing table surrounded by good luck cards and flowers. He looks a bit better but not much. Three young guys all hang around drinking. They all have gold watches and look a little like past boyfriends. It looks very similar to Elvis’ dressing room and entourage. Elton stares at them. One of them notices.

1ST HANGER-ON
Do you need a hand getting your boots on?

ELTON
What? Er, no. How many are in tonight?

He ignores Elton and carries on drinking and talking. Elton stares at himself in the mirror. He slowly gets up and goes into the bathroom.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, BATHROOM - NIGHT

He goes to the sink and racks out a line. He takes a sniff and when he comes back up he sees, on the loo, trousers down, a cadaverous Elvis. Elton leaps back in horror. Elton looks at the dead eyed Elvis on the toilet.

Elton spins back to reality and looks at himself in the mirror. He’s pale and has trouble breathing.

ELTON
Oh fuck.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Elton steps back into the room but no one takes any notice of him. He sits again at the mirror. The chanting still goes on. He looks at the useless hangers on he has there and no friends.

‘Goodbye Yellow Brick Road’.

ELTON
So what do you think you’ll do then? I bet that’ll shoot down the plane. It’ll take me a couple of vodka and tonics to set me on my feet again.

Elton gets up as he sings and walks out of the dressing room. The guys all look confused.
White Shooting

YOUNG GUY
You’re on in five minutes.

Elton carries on.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT

Elton exits through a fire door and one of the guys follows him out and watches Elton walk away as he sings.

ELTON
Maybe you'll get a replacement
There’s plenty like me to be found
Mongrels who ain't got a penny,
sniffing for tidbits like you on
the ground.

Elton walks on and goes into the night leaving the hanger on behind.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, - NIGHT

Elton walks out into the street and carries on walking away from the stadium. The neon light glows behind him.

ELTON
So goodbye yellow brick road where
the dogs of society howl
You can't plant me in your
penthouse. I'm going back to my
plough. Back to the howling old owl
in the woods. Hunting the horny
back toad. Oh, I've finally decided
my future lies. Beyond the yellow
brick road.

A yellow taxi pulls up besides him and Elton gets in.

INT. NYC TAXI - NIGHT

Elton sits in the middle of the back seat and sings directly to us.

ELTON
So goodbye yellow brick road where
the dogs of society howl
You can't plant me in your
penthouse. I'm going back to my
plough. Back to the howling old owl
in the woods.

(MORE)
ELTON (CONT'D)
Hunting the horny back toad. Oh,
I've finally decided my future
lies. I've finally decided my
future lies
I've finally decided my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road

172 EXT. NYC STREETS - NIGHT
The taxi drives off as the music plays on.

173 EXT. AMERICAN COUNTRYSIDE - SUNRISE
The taxi drives on as the sunrises.

174 EXT. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY
The taxi pulls up. Elton, still in his stage costume gets out
at a leafy upstate, private hospital. People stare amazed.

175 INT. CORRIDOR, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY
Elton walks down the corridor.

176 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY
Elton half in his mad costume has come full circle. Close up
as tears roll down his face. He is back at the last time we
saw him in rehab. He has told his story. He looks round at
the faces of the other patients. He has got to the end. The
first day of his recovery.

177 INT. BEDROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY
Elton stripped off looks at himself naked in a mirror. He
puts on his regulation grey uniform. A counselor appears.

ELTON
I don’t know if I can do this.

COUNSELOR
Nobody makes you stay. The choice
is yours. Choose who you want to
be.

The counselor hands him a pile of clothes.
COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
We all do chores here. The laundry’s down the hall.

178  INT. LAUNDRY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 178

Elton comes in. An OLD LADY is there. He smiles as she changes a load of washing. Elton looks at the row of machines. He has never done washing in his life. He looks at the coin-op system, presses a few buttons, but is unable to get the door open.

ELTON
Is this broken?

The old lady presses the door release button and it springs open. Elton puts the washing in the machine. The old lady puts a quarter in for Elton and fills it with soap powder. The machine whirls into action and Elton sits down humiliated. The old lady sits down and reads her book. Elton stares at the machine. A radio plays an Elton John song. The old lady gets up and turns it off. Elton sits. His hands are shaky. The old lady sits next to Elton and they watch the washing spin round.

ELTON (CONT'D)
I think I’m going to like it here.

179  INT. ELTON’S ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 179

Elton is alone. He now really suffers the effects of withdrawal. He starts to sweat and shake. He looks very ill. He catches sight of himself in the mirror and is horrified.

180  INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 180

Elton faces the group. A long pause.

ELTON
There was always someone better than me. Better looking. More talented. Catchier songs, whiter teeth, bigger hair. For as long as I can remember I’ve hated myself. Believed I’d never be loved.

COUNSELOR
There is a moment where we have to forgive ourselves.

Elton looks serious.
ELTON
I started acting like a cunt in ’75
and forgot to stop. I’m ashamed of
myself. I’ve spent so long being
resentful about things that don’t
matter

The group all nod in agreement and Elton smiles to himself.

ELTON (CONT’D)
I should have tried to be more
ordinary.

IVY
You were never ordinary!

Elton swings round and sees Ivy who is sitting amongst the
group as if nothing was out of the ordinary. They smile at
each other.

SHEILA
Look at you – in here! You really
are a loser. Therapy’s a waste of
time.

Elton swings round in the other direction to see that it’s
Sheila dressed in her 60’s outfit.

ELTON
You only put up with me for my
money. I was nothing but a burden
to you before that.

Suddenly ‘Hugh’ is there.

HUGH
I didn’t realise how ready you were
for all this.

ELTON
I don’t know if I am to be honest
but when I think of Ryan, his
death...I’ve watched friends and
lovers all die horribly and he did
so much and I’ve done nothing. It’s
time to stop the self pity and get
on with it.

In the reverse angle we see from behind the circle the real
patients look at Elton. Now he scans the room and sees along
with Ivy and Sheila are Fred, Bernie, Reid and Stanley.

REID
The problem is you’re selfish.
Elton walks up to Reid.

ELTON
My ‘problem’ was I believed you
loved me. I gave you everything to
try and keep what I never really
had.

FRED
I always thought you were an
introverted extrovert with
abandonment issues.

SHEILA
You what?
IVY
He’s shy. He’s always been shy.

FRED
It’s why he loves all that dressing up.

SHEILA
That’s all his fathers fault.

STANLEY
Don’t blame me. He would’ve been strange regardless.

SHEILA
Oh god. Not you.

ELTON
Mum. Shut up!!

SHEILA
You’re going to miss me when I’m dead.

ELTON
I’m not going to allow you to talk to me like this anymore. It’s going to stop.

Bernie steps forward

BERNIE
It’s about time you said that.

Elton softens as he sees his true friend.

ELTON
Better late than never. Sorry bernie, I never....

BERNIE
AH, AH, AH! I love you man. Always have, always will.

Bernie smiles. Ray williams steps forward out of the shadows and smiles.

RAY
You know, I still cry like a baby every time I hear ‘Your song’.
Can’t help it.
Then Wilson steps up.

WILSON
I’m proud of you man. There’s a little bit of you in every song you write. Not bad for a fat kid from Pinner.

Richard is there too.

RICHARD
Not bad for a virgin back stage kiss.

Arabella too.

ARABELLA
I love telling people you where my lodgers. You still owe me six pounds in rent by the way.

REID
He doesn’t know who the hell he is.

ELTON
Yes, I do! I’m Elton Hercules John!

A young voice breaks through
REGGIE (O.S.)
I thought you were Reggie Dwight.

They all turn and stare at little Reggie who stands in the middle of the chairs. Elton walks to Reggie and kneels down. The boy holds out his hand and touches Elton’s cheek, as if to see that he is real.

ELTON
I haven’t been Reggie Dwight for years.

Behind Elton the group on chairs is made up of the real patients in therapy as they watch Elton cry. Reggie stands in front of them.

REGGIE
When are you going to hug me?

Slowly Elton puts his arms around the tiny figure and pulls him close.

181 INT. ELTON’S ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton by himself. He looks transformed. Clean, healthy, clear headed. He looks in the mirror. Elton puts on a boater hat and smiles at us. He sings slowly:

Intro: “I’M STILL STANDING”

ELTON
You could never know what it’s like. Your blood like winter freezes just like ice. And there’s a cold lonely light that shines from you. You’ll wind up like the wreck you hide behind that mask you use.

182 INT. CORRIDOR, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton walks down the corridor, singing.

ELTON
And did you think this fool could never win. Well look at me, I’m coming back again. I got a taste of life in a simple way. And if you need to know why I’m still standing you just fade away.
INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton walks through into the room. The group are all there with Bernie. Everyone looks bright and happy. The beautiful song picks up the tempo and a dance number breaks out.

ELTON
Don’t you know I’m still standing
better than I ever did. Looking
like a true survivor, feeling like
a little kid. I’m still standing
after all this time. Picking up the
pieces of my life, my heart, my
soul, my mind.

BERNIE
Once I never coulda hope to win.
You started down the road leaving
me no friend. The threats you made
were meant to cut me down. And if
love was just a circus you’d be a
clown by now.

Elton hugs Bernie and waves to the group and walks out.

INT. Corridor, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

Elton dances along the corridor with the group behind as he sings.

ELTON
You know I’m still standing better
than I ever did. Looking like a
true survivor, feeling like a
littke kid. I’m still standing
after all this time. Picking up the
pieces of my life without you on my
mind.

He gets to large double doors, turns and smiles at us then he throws the doors open. Sunlight bursts in and Elton is silhouetted in the frame.

P.S. Scenes of the real E.J and the joys of his life since rehab.